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EMPTY CHURCHES
AND
HOW TO FILL THEM.

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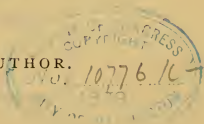
HOW TO FILL THEM.

BY

REV. J. ^{out}BENSON [✓]HAMILTON.

SECOND THOUSAND.

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DEDICATED

TO

REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, THE AMERICAN SPURGEON,

AND

REV. C. H. SPURGEON, THE ENGLISH TALMAGE,

EACH OF WHOM IN HIS OWN WAY IS A PRINCE AMONG GOSPEL
"SENSATIONALISTS."

EMPTY CHURCHES, AND HOW TO FILL THEM.



I.

“Hearken to me ; I also will shew mine opinion.”

JOB xxxii, 10.

THIS book is issued neither to gain notoriety nor to make money. “How to evangelize the masses” is the most vital religious problem of the times. The author seeks to direct attention to the necessity of more earnest effort in winning the multitude to the house of God and invite discussion as to the best method of accomplishing it. His ministry has been brief—but a single decade—yet it has been suggestive and instructive in the line of the present discussion. His mission has been similar to that of the prophet: he has been called to prophesy to dry bones, and *find the bones*. What may seem to some but vagaries are the results and outgrowth of experience. The following

pages contain a brief and condensed statement of principles and methods which have achieved remarkable results; appended is a short sketch of the working and outcome of the methods, and a sample of the instruments used. Criticism is expected and desired. A communication addressed to the author suggesting a better way to fill our "empty churches" will be gratefully received as a special favor.

An invitation to preach before the Ministerial Association of the Lewiston District, Maine Conference, first led to shaping the thoughts now given to the public.

II.

"Why is the house of God forsaken?" NEH. xiii, 11.

AN old recipe for cooking a hare is, "To cook a hare, first catch it." The motto of the modern minister should be, "To save men, first reach them." That the Church has lost its hold, to a large extent, upon the masses is no longer a debatable question. The class of non-church-goers is large, well-to-do, intelligent, and rapidly increasing. With an eloquent, cultured, earnest, and spiritual ministry; church edifices numerous, comfortable, tasty and commodious; a church member-

ship large, zealous and rich, we fail to more than half fill our church seats Sabbath after Sabbath. It is freely asserted, and can doubtless be proved to be too true, "that the churches will not average a congregation equal to their enrolled membership." A careful examination of the newspaper, pulpit, and platform discussion of this question, embodying personal research, careful inquiry, and a wide experience, establishes as true the astounding statement that not more than one in five of our Protestant population are regular attendants upon religious worship.* Half-

*The following is taken from the *New York Christian Advocate*, June 19, 1879:—

It is claimed that less than ten churches in Brooklyn are crowded. Most are only partially filled. The reports from New York are but little better. Brooklyn has 600,000 population. Of these, 529,000 are Protestant or non-Catholic. She has provided 225 Protestant churches and missions, with a seating capacity of 115,000. On a pleasant Sabbath these churches contain only 60,000, (counted.) Thus 469,000 Protestants are absent from church each Sabbath. If it is allowed that only about one half of the people of a community can reasonably attend church at any one time, we still have about 175,000 wandering about, or lounging and spending the Sabbath in sinful ways, while only 60,000 are found in their places. This is Brooklyn, the city of churches. If they do this in the green tree, what will they do in the dry?

The record of New York is not the most encouraging. She has a population of 1,100,000. Of these, 922,000 are Protestant, or non-Catholic. She has 319 Protestant churches and missions, with a seating capacity of 170,000. On a pleas-

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empty churches have become accepted as the general rule, and the exceptions are occasional and marked. The preacher who fills his church, unless gifted with rare genius, is suspected of doing something foolish or improper. "Sensationalist" becomes the anathema of the Church and the epithet of the world. An able and earnest Methodist preacher said, a little snappishly, in reply to a remark about the large attendance upon the ministry of a brother,

"A monkey and a hand-organ can draw a crowd any time."

The remark was true; but the brother who made it will never be able to do it without them unless he radically changes his methods. It is not an unworthy ambition to have, as the Master did, a multitude lend a willing and attentive ear to the gospel message. An empty church is a banquet without guests. The gospel feast is ready, but the guests have not arrived. We have made extra exertions, but are still compelled to say to the Master, "Yet there is room."

ant Sabbath 90,000 can be found in the church, leaving about 370,000 of the church-going half to wander and find rest and entertainment where Satan may lead them. Thus in these two great cities about one fifth of the half who, in spite of children and family cares and sickness, might go, do actually find their way into the house of God.

The Master replies : " Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, *that my house may be filled.*"

III.

" Beautiful for situation is Mount Zion, the city of the great King." PsA. xlviii, 2.

ANY location is popularly supposed to be good enough for a church. A site in an undesirable locality, on a back street, away from the populous portion of the community, is gladly accepted as a gift, or at a low price. The church is built, and we wonder at the thin and straggling congregations we are able to gather. If the trustees who built the church were to build a business block, hotel, or a public hall, the last place they would select would be the church site. The block would be built where business is, not where they want to draw it; the hotel would follow the travel; the public hall would be located where it would be easy to draw a crowd. A round price would be paid for a good site rather than take a poor one as a gift. Many churches are to-day struggling to turn toward their doors the tide of souls which they turned from them by the criminal carelessness manifested in se-

lecting their building lot. Fishermen say, "If you want to catch fish, set your nets where the fish run." An application of this principle to gospel fishing would greatly increase the haul. I went fishing once in a very beautiful little pond. I tried in vain for an hour to attract the attention of the fish, but failed to get a nibble. A countryman passing, I hailed him.

"Halloo, neighbor! What kind of fish are in this pond?"

He replied, with a grin: "Nothing but bullfrogs."

I sought another fishing-place immediately. It matters little how much skill or perseverance you manifest if there are no fish in your neighborhood. When Jesus called Simon and his companions as his disciples, he gave them an object-lesson in gospel fishing. Jesus said, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Simon answered, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." At the first haul they inclosed so many fish their net brake, and they filled both ships so that they began to sink. The wondrous success attending the labors of these disciples when they became fishers of men is proof that the object-lesson was not in vain.

IV.

“ If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment ; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place ; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool : are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts ? ”

JAMES ii, 2-4.

THE majority of our churches are neither a credit to us nor an honor to the Master. One half the money invested with the same enterprise and painstaking the building committee would have exercised in their own business would give us more desirable places of worship. We have gone to two extremes. For the sake of economy we have been guilty of niggardly meanness. The country is dotted all over with shabby, uninviting chapels, without either beauty or convenience. The house of God compared with the home of the worshipers is cheap and bare. The other extreme is reckless expenditure and pinchbeck display. Gorgeous temples of ornate architecture, loud and lavish decorations in fresco and upholstery, are erected as monuments of vulgar pride and worldly selfishness. Generally inspired by pride without means, the temple has a lofty spire pointing heavenward, and a heavy

mortgage dragging in the other direction. Either extreme is discreditable to the Church and dishonoring to the Master. Select the best site to be obtained, build a neat, tasty, beautiful, convenient, commodious house, and *pay for it*. A church debt is a bar across the door. It is like a slough in the highway over which is a sign, saying, "Deep mud here; keep away!" If you are groaning under a mortgage, your cordial invitations to worship with you are suspected of being inspired by a willingness, if not a desire, to have other shoulders ease your burden. Our expensive churches have largely been the means of committing us to the false and wicked system of selling seats in the house of God. It is common to have the dedication followed by the appraisal of the pews, and then dispose of them by auction to the highest bidder. The most desirable are made the costliest, and often there is lively bidding for choice; not that any one cares much for the seat, but for the estimation and appreciation which goes with it. We say to the man with the long purse: "Sit here in a good place." But we say to the man without a purse, "Stand thou there, or go up in the pauper's loft, the gallery." The last place where distinction based on dollars and cents should be made is in the house of God. The man who has a spark

of self-respect, although he may be a devoted Christian, will worship God at home rather than sit in the pauper's pew. The indifferent and worldly care too little for church privileges to pay roundly for them, unless they bring in return for the investment sufficient worldly advantage to pay. Your pressing invitations to them seem but the trader's bid for patronage, and they deal with you accordingly. If you offer them a free seat, they will repel the offer with scorn. They are able to buy what they want. Renting pews is bad enough; selling them is worse. Many churches to-day are largely owned by private parties. They have loaned money to the Lord, and taken seats in his house as security. Strangers are invited to church only to give these persons opportunity to haggle with them about pew-rentals. The income is no benefit to the Church; but pays a usurious interest to the pew-owner on his pretended gift. Church debts and the pew system are two of the chief obstacles which lie athwart the threshold of the house of God. If we will lift the first and abolish the other we will have taken a great stride toward the solution of the problem before us.

V.

“ Many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice ; and many shouted aloud for joy : so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people.” EZRA iii, 12, 13.

WE hear very much to-day of the failure of Methodism ; of the worldliness which is honeycombing her spiritual strength ; of the trumpery of pride, love of applause, personal ambition, and dependence upon mere human appliances of the pulpit, which has robbed it of the power of the fathers. The indifference of the masses to the Gospel is directly charged to the lack of ability and spirituality of the ministry. The Church has not a few “ ancients,” whose weeping is heard above the shouting of the great multitude. No intelligent, unprejudiced mind can for a moment compare the pulpit of to-day with that of the past and fail to see a wonderful increase in vigor, versatility, and effectiveness. To-day as never before has it power to sway and save the masses. There has never been a period in the history of the Church when there has been simpler, more powerful, or more spiritual preaching of the Gospel than the Church enjoys to-day. The sons have to compete with forces of which the fathers never

dreamed. The latter came occasionally, to a people whose only intellectual recreation, entertainment, or stimulant was furnished by the pulpit. The preacher was the daily paper, the circulating library, the lyceum orator, the divine messenger, all in one. Little wonder the people flocked in crowds, gave earnest attention, and were so powerfully impressed. The sons address several times a week a people surfeited with the rich treasures poured into their laps by the press and platform. The press, pervading every hamlet and neighborhood, scatters the brightest thoughts of the world's wise men upon every subject, secular and sacred. The platform affords abundant opportunity of hearing the most brilliant orators in their masterpieces. The preacher is thus embarrassed in seeking to create and maintain an interest in a familiar theme in minds overcrowded with a multitude of thoughts about novel and fascinating questions, presented in the most attractive manner by those who bring the results of a lifetime of laborious and special effort. Little wonder that the average pulpit suffers by the comparison and fails to accomplish what is expected and demanded. That the ministry of to-day is able to command the attention it does is a marked tribute to its versatility and effectiveness. The spiritual condition of the Church,

its rapid and marvelous growth, its wide influence, are unanswerable arguments in behalf of the piety and faithfulness of the preacher. An emasculated pulpit would inevitably beget a barren and powerless Church; which no one but a few of the "ancients" imagines is our condition. To scout at the lightning express and long for the lumbering old stage-coach will not stay the progress of this rushing age. It is a pity our tearful friends did not live in the times for which they mourn. The Church cannot afford to be outstripped by the world. Its mission is to lead, not to follow in hailing distance. Literature has almost advanced to where it is capable of giving to the divine word its fitting place. Science has, by a succession of dazzling leaps, but reached a point where it can see through a glass darkly, the foot-prints of the divine Creator, and measure his power and influence. When it shall have reached the summit of knowledge and the fullness of discovery it will find already there the disciple of Jesus, who has been borne on the wings of faith to the mountain top toward which the philosopher has long been toiling with weary steps.

The Church needs to make an advance all along the line. Let the sword of the Spirit be used not to split hairs, or spur up our lagging comrades, or hold in check the eager ones;

but to smite sin and slay sinners. Where preaching the Gospel degenerates into denunciation of the weakness or wickedness of the pulpit or the Church revival services become dress parades for saints instead of battle-fields to sinners. We need not wonder that so few are slain. We busy ourselves too much with the manual of arms, and neglect campaign duty. If the lamentations of the "ancients" are well founded, we need not only a re-ordination of the ministry but a reconversion of the Church.

VI.

"We forbade him, because he followeth not us." MARK ix, 38.

CHRISTIANITY is not a failure. The children of God are not a discomfited, disorganized mob, but a thundering and conquering legion. Yet their victories are not a tithe of what they ought to and may be. Sectarian difference and internal dissension stay our onward march. We lag when we should run; we limp when we might fly. Denominational jealousy postpones indefinitely the reign of Jesus over a redeemed world. As religious persecution has ever been the most bitter, so pious criticism and censure are the keenest and least charitable. A difference in manner and meth-

od of work from commonly accepted standards is as sternly denounced and rebuked as divergence in belief. The laborer whose work is colored and shaped by his individual peculiarity finds himself tossed upon a stormy sea which the voice of the Master cannot quiet. The tempest is evoked by the disciples in defiance of the Master's rebuke and command. The Christian ministers who receive the most unsparing criticism and censure at the hands of their brethren are not the careless, dilatory, or unfaithful; but the untiring, the indefatigable, the successful, whose only sin is in achieving success by unusual methods. The Church and the world take the cue from ministerial associations and conventions, and the secular and religious press echo with the changes that are rung on "sensationalism" and "charlatanry."

Is there no golden mean between excision and neglect? Can we not have exhortation to zeal and devotion without denunciation, misrepresentation, and excommunication? Have we reached that state where we must stop the work of converting the world to Christ that we may lash each other up to a uniform method, discipline, or effectiveness? Is it not possible we may play the martinet in keeping straight our own ranks, and neglect to inspire an onward and aggressive movement

which will break the ranks of the enemy? Let us make an advance; but upon the enemy, and not upon the weak, dispirited, and unfaithful stragglers who hang upon our lines. Let us make a distinction between the enemy and our flying cavalry raiders, who by a brilliant dash break a line of communication, or take by surprise an outpost of the enemy, and in an hour advance our campaign a whole week.

VII.

“Never man spake like this man.” JOHN vii, 46.

THE almost unbroken monotony of religious effort is one of the principal causes of the popular indifference to the gospel. The platform, even in its treatment of the profoundest themes, finds a willing and attentive hearing because of the novelty of its treatment and its frequent surprises. The press has grown to enormous proportions in this generation. It now claims superiority over the pulpit, and boldly challenges it in its own hitherto exclusive domain. It will inevitably succeed in usurping the preacher's place unless the pulpit, by accommodating itself to the popular tastes, shall renew its lease of life and power and make for itself, by the magnetism of personal

presence, a place in human affections the pen and type cannot fill. The press is fresh, spicy, and bold, even to irreverence at times, in its treatment of all subjects. When it becomes monotonous, or prosy, or timid, it immediately loses its power. The people turn from the average pulpit to the press with but a half-concealed relish and relief. If we will carefully examine the style and manner of Bible preaching, we will be surprised to learn that the method of preaching most unsparingly denounced to-day is nearest to the Bible standard. How did the prophets preach? Were their messages carefully-prepared essays, or dry and elaborate discussions, or naked statements of facts? By no means. They were rude but graphic parables, intensely colored, profusely illustrated, and powerfully dramatic. They were sensational in its most exaggerated sense. Jesus, who should be the model of pulpit oratory, never preached a great sermon. He wasted no time in discussing abstruse, mysterious, and unexplainable dogmas. His sermons were simple, familiar, off-hand chats about every-day topics. They were broken in upon by question or suggestion from the audience or his disciples. He founded divine truth upon familiar incidents or living facts. His ministry excelled that of his predecessors or successors in winning the attention, moving

the heart, and making plain and interesting to the multitude the word of God. His sermons were stories linked to a divine truth by the word "like." Is it not strange that those who claim to be his disciples have only words of denunciation and rebuke for the sensational, story-telling preacher whose ministry, like his Master's, is thronged by a fascinated multitude? "The clerical mountebank," whose folly is only a faint imitation of his Master's method, should feel complimented at the rebuke and epithets so lavishly poured upon him. It was the compliment his Master received. The greatest danger of the hour is not sensationalism in the pulpit but the lack of it. The wide-spread and rapidly increasing indifference to the Gospel can only be arrested by returning to gospel methods. The secret of drawing a crowd is found in the preaching of Jesus. If the Bible could be made the standard text-book of homiletics and the conversations of Jesus the models of gospel sermons, now, as in the past, the multitude would flock to hear the word. We want less formality, and more fire; less system, and more simplicity; less exegesis, and more Jesus.

VIII.

“Give ye them to eat.” LUKE ix, 13.

IF the church is only half filled and a tide of the churchless drift by the open door somebody is at fault. The Gospel should be so proclaimed that men must hear, and, hearing, must obey. Lack of power is often the result of error, not of the heart, but the head; not in spirit, but in method. None but a very hungry or greedy fish will be caught with a bare hook. You cannot wonder that a banquet goes begging if it consists of nothing but empty dishes. Is it not possible we have been expending our care and labor in making a tasty and elaborate display of our table-ware and cutlery, instead of spreading a bountiful feast for our hungry guests? If we have, we need not wonder that they prefer to go hungry, rather than attempt to satisfy their hunger by going through the motions of eating at our *fiat* feast. Is there not too much truth in the accusation that, after we have filled our tables by high-sounding announcements, we have nothing to offer our guests but hash or hard-tack, poor in quality, and little of it? Jesus never disappointed. The hungry soul that came to him enjoyed a bill of fare, fresh, varied, and according to the times and sea-

sons, and went away satisfied. It is not boarding-house folly, but true house-wifely wisdom, to prepare such accessories to the feast as will create a relish for the food as well as satisfy the appetite.

The average sermon is above the average head. The preacher is busy with his books and magazines, and becomes interested in the theories and vagaries engendered in the rarefied atmosphere of the mountain top. He extols or demolishes them, as they appear helpful or hurtful. The people who rarely visit the mountain summit, but dwell and toil on its sides or in the valleys, wonder and *wander*. Speculative preaching, instead of the simple and practical Gospel, is responsible for many empty seats.

Too much of our preaching is barren of results because we have aimed the heavy guns of our artillery at the stars instead of souls. Our projectiles, which should have been solid shot or bursting bombs, have been only sky-rockets or Roman candles, making a grand display but ending in sparks and smoke. Brilliance can tickle, profundity can astound; but simplicity and directness never will fail to interest and convict.

IX.

"I AM hath sent me unto you." EXOD. iii, 14.

THE province of the pulpit, in the popular estimation, has become circumscribed through our unfaithfulness. We are ambassadors of God to a sinful world. We are content to become servants of those we are commissioned to lead and teach. The place of the pulpit politically, socially, morally, is at the head of the column, as the recognized leader in every reform. Godless politics will overthrow this nation, as it has those whose ruins fill history, unless the pulpit shall make its power felt. The stigma of partisanship is generally sufficient to deter us from political preaching. Careful reading of the powerful blasts from prophets and apostles against national wickedness ought to convince the most conservative or skeptical that political preaching is Bible preaching.

Temperance is too often unduly exalted and emphasized as a cloak to other sins, or as a stock in trade. Temperance tramps leap from the gutter to the front rank of the army of reform, and crowd aside the divinely appointed leaders. Although often vulgar, profane, vicious, and immoral, and guilty of every vice but drunkenness, their signature to the tem-

perance pledge is evidence of sufficient virtue to warrant them in denouncing the Church and ministry for half-heartedness and inconsistency. The pulpit, instead of leading in a temperance reform based upon the Gospel, is content to serve in a campaign under the leadership of irreligious men very often actuated only by selfish and mercenary motives. It must co-operate in methods known to be hurtful, and whose results are illusionary. Effort is wasted, and golden opportunities are frittered away. If the preacher is faithful to duty he will seek to make the reform religious by basing it upon divine truth. He will be defeated; the motto of modern reform is not Christ, but *stick*. The Gospel is unwelcome; it is too sweeping. To declare its teaching, that he who is guilty of profanity or uncleanness or immorality will go to hell as inevitably as he who dies drunk, will end the connection of the preacher with the crusade. By word or hint he will be speedily told that his room is preferable to his company. There are exceptions, but this will be found to be a faithful description of the temperance reform, born without the Church. Social corruption and dishonesty wait upon the pulpit for exposure and denunciation. If its voice is silent the world will soon condone the sin. If your ministry has nothing to do with the matters

of this world it will be powerless for good. We need in every Christian pulpit a John the Baptist. We have diverged very widely from the Bible examples of dealing with worldly folly and wickedness. Too much of our preaching is based upon the theory, "There are no Jews in town; give it to them!"

We denounce and rebuke the pride of Nebuchadnezzar, the sin of Babylon, the treason of Judas, the ingratitude of the Jews, the cowardliness of Peter; but we have little to say about the tattler, the scandal-monger, the hypocrite, the pew-owning rum-seller, the trustee distiller, the tippling steward, the dishonest bankrupt, the social leper, the political fraud and bull-dozer. The house of shame, the licentious dance, the theatrical lazar-house, the vicious press, may all gorge themselves upon their helpless victims within the shadow of the pulpit, and we are silent. To declare the voice of God with regard to these soul-damning evils would be sensational. It is true it is the way all the Bible preachers preached, from Noah to Paul, but it is not proper or popular to-day. The sword of the Spirit is intended to be a Damascus blade whose keen edge, under the weight given by the arm of a giant, is to cleave from crown to sole. The weakest arm, when backed by the divine Spirit, has a giant's might. We make

the blade edgeless, or hide it in a scabbard and wear it as an ornament of dress parade rather than wield it as a weapon of war. Date the Gospel, the hour and place you preach, and declare the whole truth as if you were sent of God, and you will lack neither hearers nor power.

X.

“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” EZEK. iii, 18.

A MAN seated himself upon the railroad track about dusk one evening to wait for the lightning express. A friend approaching him, and seeing his danger, warned him as follows:

“My dear friend, the silver moon is gilding with splendor the hills and valleys spread out before us. Yonder rippling waterfall thrills with its entrancing melody the listening ear. The feathered songsters have sung their vesper hymns, and are now perched in silent repose. All nature, after the bustle and confusion of the day, is hushed and still. From her inexhaustible resources, man has gathered materials which he has shaped into creatures of beauty and power. The locomotive hurrying

across the continent with the speed of the wind is the creation of his genius. Upon the iron pathway, constructed for it, it moves with fiery impatience and resistless force. My dear friend, I entreat you, at your earliest convenience, take an excursion by rail to the mountains."

The man sitting on the track was so wrapt in admiration at the beautiful address that *he did not move*. As the speaker bade him good-night the whistle of the coming train fell faintly upon his ears.

Another friend approached, and said:—

"My dear hearer-ah, the place-ah, upon which you are sitting-ah, is not a very comfortable seat-ah. It is intended-ah, for another purpose-ah, if you do not-ah, change your position-ah, my dear hearer-ah, I fear-ah, you will-ah, be put-ah, to a great inconvenience-ah. Good-night-ah."

As he turned away he heard the nearing thunder of the rushing wheels.

The brother of the man in danger now appears. Taking in the situation at a glance, he rushes to him, and shouts:—

"What! John! Are you sitting on the railroad track, and the lightning express almost due? GET OUT OF THAT! YOU WON'T? Man! don't you hear it coming? Now it is just around the curve! The thrill of the rail

warns you, you have not a moment to spare. QUICK! SEE THE FLASH OF THE HEADLIGHT! NOW it is in our faces! JUMP! FOR YOUR LIFE."

If the man will not move, his brother will grasp him and, in spite of himself, tear him from under the hungry wheels. If he saves him just as the hot breath of the iron steed brushes his face as it sweeps by, do you think he will lament his earnestness or mighty effort?

If the Bible is true, souls are in danger. Jesus, while not seeking to terrorize men's hearts, by an occasional sentence, like the gleam of a lightning flash in a dark cloud, revealed the terrible penalty hanging over the unrepentant sinner. Language, although Oriental imagery may combine with Anglo-Saxon keenness and invention, is incapable of even hinting at the possibilities of what it is *to be lost*. Sent with the divine message to the souls in peril, offering life and warning of impending death, we can lisp of moonshine and waterfalls, or drone commonplace and meaningless platitudes. If the brotherhood of man and the reality of the immediate peril are permitted to sweep in upon and take possession of the soul, the heart will burn and the tongue will flame. Preaching the Gospel demands nervous, emphatic, terrible, burning, tender, words. If

you want to crowd your church build a fire in the pulpit. The fiery zeal and quenchless enthusiasm of our fathers would seem a foolish eccentricity in this fastidious age. If we could add to our culture and versatility our fathers' mighty fervor and fiery, fanatical, zeal, popular indifference to the Gospel would disappear like a straw in a roaring furnace.

At a recent session of one of our most important annual conferences I witnessed a remarkable and instructive incident. A young man of considerable local notoriety as a successful evangelist sought ordination as a local deacon. He had twice failed to pass the necessary examinations. He was said, publicly, to possess inability to study; privately, to lack inclination. A suspension of the rules was sought in his behalf because of the wonderful success attending his ministry. An eloquent and distinguished clergyman, who was an ex-college president and an author of national reputation, advocated the granting of the young man's request in these words:—

“I have been honored by the Church with positions of responsibility; I have been connected with colleges about eighteen years; I possess some critical knowledge of Hebrew, Latin, and Greek; I have some reputation as an author. But I would give it all to possess the gift of this young man.”

Of course, the request was granted. The young man's power consists mainly, if not entirely, in deep piety, holy enthusiasm, devoted earnestness and fiery zeal for the conversion of souls, which a generation ago was the rule and not the exception in the Methodist pulpit.

XI.

"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." MARK ii, 27.

THE widely-prevailing and rapidly-increasing irreverence for, and desecration of, the Sabbath is vitally connected with our theme. Our churches are half empty, and a great crowd surges by their open doors seeking recreation and rest by using the Sabbath as a holiday. How to turn the tide from the streets and fields to the house of God is the problem before us. It will not be done by wrathful denunciations of the wanderers. Those who are compelled by stern necessity to toil all the hours of the daylight, six days out of the week, in dark, close, and unhealthy rooms should not receive uncharitable censure if they take advantage of the quiet and rest of the seventh to breathe the pure air and bask in the sunshine as they stroll in field, for-

est, or by lake or sea-side. We are to a large degree responsible for the evil. Unrestricted license ever treads upon the steps of tyranny. Sabbath desecration is the legitimate rebound from its wrong observance. Much of our teaching, both past and present, with regard to the Sabbath is false and hurtful. We have inculcated and enjoined an observance neither rational nor scriptural. The Jewish Sabbath, with its burdensome restrictions, was not, nor could be, transferred to the Christian dispensation. In the new dispensation, not one day but every day was sacred; holy; God's day. The day upon which Christ arose from the dead became the day of the week toward which every Christian turned with reverent and holy joy. It was distinct from the Sabbath, and in time supplanted it as the day for worship and rest. The change was not made by divine command, but by human custom and law. The Puritan Sabbath was the result of an attempt to enforce a barbarous law in an enlightened age. It was a failure; and in the rebound we tremble before the encroachments of the continental Sabbath. To remedy the evil we must cease our attempts to enforce an obsolete law, and in its stead create and develop a healthy Christian sentiment in favor of the religious observance of the Lord's Day. Memorial day is set apart to remind us of what

those whose memories we celebrate purchased for us by their lives ; it is the last day of the year when treason should be encouraged, or its boasts or apologies listened to. The Lord's day is set apart by the best Christian sentiment, human custom and law as the day for rest and worship of our divine Redeemer. We should devote it, not to the things he rebuked or condemned, but to those things he taught, exemplified, and died to establish. Further than this we have no scriptural warrant for going, or asking others to go. We have erred not only in our conception of the letter of the law but the spirit. On account of the growing custom of Sunday travel and excursions we have permitted ourselves to impeach our own record and discredit one of our most important institutions. The camp-meeting has been recognized for more than a generation as distinctively a Methodist institution. From its origin, the Sabbath has been considered not too holy or sacred a day to preach the Gospel or lead men to Christ. A combined attempt is now being made from without and within to close camp-meetings upon the Sabbath or abolish them. Those who champion the crusade from within, profess to do it in behalf of the sacredness of God's day. They are honest, doubtless, but very inconsistent. At a session of a New

England conference recently I heard a lengthy and heated discussion of this subject, *pro* and *con*. Many brilliant speeches were made, and learned arguments advanced upon both sides. I must confess I recollect to-day most distinctly one remark made in favor of Sabbath camp-meetings. In answer to the objection urged that the camp-meetings held over the Sabbath were not successful, one speaker mentioned one meeting that was successful; one of the speakers who addressed the great congregation on the Sabbath with power and unction was the leader in the debate against Sunday camp-meetings, and he had *traveled on a Sunday excursion train to get there.*

Other denominations manifest great anxiety lest we shall suffer loss of spiritual power and bring reproach upon the cause of Christ by holding our camp-meetings over the Sabbath. We fear they would not lament very much the abolition of the Methodist camp-meetings; especially the one that could secure the lease of the grounds. "The little one has become a thousand in a day." The camp-meeting is a capital opportunity, and capitally improved, to impress the land with the liveliness and aggressiveness as well as spiritual power of the "little one," which is still growing. We can well appreciate the friendly advice which would bid us annihilate or emasculate our camp-meet-

ing, which is our most aggressive movement for the salvation of the masses. After the flurry of the present agitation is over we will be content to attain to the shrewdness and spirituality of our fathers, and in the future, as in the past, make the Sabbath in the grove a battle day for sinners as well as a harvest day for souls. The thoughtless crowd may seem to obscure, by their folly and levity, the blessed influences of the day and services; it is only an uncovering of the evil which exists and would find occasion and opportunity if there were no camp-meeting, and an opportunity without a religious accompaniment. It is a great grief to many that the camp-meeting has become a great financial institution, and thus, indirectly, if not directly, necessitates a pecuniary income which transforms the leafy temple into a mart for money-getting. No one imagines a camp-meeting is run for financial profit. The only profit desired and sought is to provide for the necessary expense for present and future advantages. These are just as legitimate as ordinary church expenses. What would become of our Churches if they were deprived of the enormous stream of money so lavishly poured into their treasuries in payment for services rendered or benefits obtained upon the Lord's day? He who is content to share the advantages of church privileges se-

cured through sale or rental of church pews for Sabbath use has a very eccentric conscience to object to profit on railroad tickets, or even gate money, received on the same day.

In many of our churches the Sabbath is far from being a day of rest. It is the most burdensome of the whole week. There is a preaching service in the morning and afternoon, with a Sabbath-school service sandwiched between; the latter part of the day occupied by two or three social services. Those who consistently and conscientiously participate in all the church services are often heard to say, "Sunday is the most fatiguing of the whole week." When we fill the Lord's day so full that relish and interest are weakened, if not lost, we have committed a grave blunder, and furnished a reasonable excuse not only for neglect of divine worship, but Sabbath desecration.

XII.

"He commanded us to preach unto the people." Acts x, 42.

IN the multiplicity of services enjoyed by the modern Church it would be strange if there were not marked preference shown some one. The preference is as diverse as the character of the individuals. Some freely say,

“If I could only attend one service, it would be the Sabbath-school.” Others say, “The class-meeting is *my* meeting.” Still others say, “The social prayer and conference meeting is to me the most blessed and profitable.” The preaching service is growing less and less important to many in the Church. The tendency is toward one preaching service on the Sabbath, and that at the hour when the unsaved masses are least likely to be reached. The half-hour sermon is the only opportunity afforded the preacher to declare his divine message. The character of the audience insensibly gives direction to his preaching. As the congregation is largely Christian the sermons are prepared for their benefit. Very often any other kind of preaching is resented. “It is *our* Church; *our* preacher; *we* pay the bills, and the sermon should be adapted to *us*, and for *our* benefit.” The opportunities for successfully making a direct and searching appeal to the thoughtless or careless sinner are few. Exhortations to sinners, or denunciations of sin, seem, and frequently are, ill-timed and out of place.

The undue emphasis laid upon the Sabbath-school and social service inevitably creates a tendency to belittle the preaching of the Gospel. The supreme hour of the week, when it is easiest to gather the floating crowd to hear

the Gospel, is the popular and primitive "early candle-light." Yet this is occupied by a service whose principal and too often exclusive object is the benefit of the Church members. It is easy to see how far we have drifted from primitive customs when we find Methodist churches silent and dark, Sabbath evenings, the year round. In a dark, gloomy, ill-ventilated vestry there is held a mongrel service of song, relation of incidents, exegesis of mysterious or doubtful passages of Scripture, denunciation of the coldness or lukewarmness of Christians, exhortations to sinners, and an occasional long-winded prayer, whose ejaculations and pet phrases, by frequent and long continued repetition, have become stereotyped in the head of the speaker and in the memory of the listener. The pastor sees the hour when he could easiest reach the ears and hearts of the unsaved souls spent in this service with unvarying monotony through the year. His only opportunity is to snatch a few moments at the close, and, in spite of the unfavorable circumstances, try to press home the gospel message he is commissioned to proclaim. The prayer or social service, in its place, and properly conducted, is a mighty power for the strengthening and quickening of the Church. It cannot be a successful agency for the evangelization of souls. It is out of place as a

Sabbath service unless necessary to fill an hour when the Gospel cannot be preached. It is not a Methodist institution, as at present conducted in New England. It is a custom borrowed from the standing order. It is born of formality rather than spirituality. If the Churches which spend the Sabbath evening in this so-called social service could be induced to return to the primitive Methodist service the change would give us new life and power, and double our congregations, by turning to our doors the crowd who can be reached at no other time. Give us the old-fashioned preaching service at "early candle-light." Leave the close, dark, bare vestry, and go to the bright, light, cheery, carpeted audience-room. Preach a short gospel sermon, searching and tender, accompanied by the baptism which prayer will always bring; let the people follow the sermon by a short social service of song and exhortation directly in the line of the sermon; let there be personal effort in conversation with sinners; close the meeting by a service of prayer at the altar for, and with, souls. Such a service would be no novelty. It is only what our fathers used with such marvelous power and success. Not only would there be a large increase in the attendance but there would be surprising spiritual results.

There are exceptions, of course; wherever

the Church can preach more interestingly and more effectively than the preacher it may well do the preaching, not only Sabbath evening but all day; but the man who cannot preach better than the people to whom he ministers is out of place when he is in their pulpit. When Christ was planning to establish his Church he did not send out men to lead prayer-meetings, but to preach the Gospel. Prayer, exhortation, and testimony supplement the preaching of the word; they cannot take its place. My commission is not to lead class, superintend a Sunday-school, conduct a social meeting, but to preach the Gospel. If that is the supreme design in my call, I ought to preach at the time and in the manner that I may reach the most souls. No one will dispute that the supreme hour of the week for religious service is Sabbath evening. The reasons are simple and yet convincing. Those who have strolled about all day, or are tired of being in the house, when evening comes are ready to go somewhere. Make your church service attractive and they can be easily induced to attend. The church never looks so well as when lighted and filled. There is a peculiar charm to singing and speaking by "candle-light," which is hard to explain. Lectures and concerts which fail by daylight are successful at night.

One great advantage of the plan proposed is, it gives the Gospel the hour when the soul is most easily impressed, and when there is little opportunity for the impressions to be dispelled. The people disperse with the truth ringing in their ears. The subject of discussion in the home circle is the religious service just attended, and in the quiet hour the Spirit has a golden opportunity to clinch the nails driven by the preached word.

But it is objected to this: "This is *our* meeting; the Church will not grow in grace if it has no chance to work." Very well; go to work. Talk is not work. Growth in grace will follow far more from listening to a sermon thoroughly prepared than by the repetition of commonplaces or disjointed exhortations often interesting to no one but the speaker. This objection is most freely made by those who think it is the whole duty of the Church and minister to feed and nurse them. They care less for the salvation of souls or the welfare of the Church than they do to exercise their gift; which, very frequently, is only the gift of continuance.

The prodigal's elder brother, when the whole household was rejoicing because of the return of the wanderer, sulked and found fault because he had been given no kid. His modern imitator does not scruple to retard or destroy

a revival by his demands to be fed. He must have bread, although all the world starve to death. The Church that interests itself distinctively in building up its own membership will lose its missionary spirit and become selfish and indolent. In the closet, class-room and week-day social service you can labor, if prayer is labor. If you are consumed with a desire to witness for Christ or warn men to turn from sin, do it on the street, in the shop, or in your neighbor's house. The trouble is that to talk in meeting is the desire. Many who are heard there lengthily and frequently never talk of religion any where else. The Church in many places is developing a strange weakness for talk rather than power in prayer. As we grow formal and less spiritual we pray less and talk more. The great majority of the Church find it comparatively easy to talk, but very hard to pray. Prayer-meetings are opened by prayer, and then the time is occupied by speech and song. Upon this mistaken custom we may well charge whatever of failure there is in our labors, or lack of religious activity and spiritual power in our experiences. If we can return to primitive Methodist customs, and make the Sabbath a day of preaching and studying the word of God; make our prayer-meetings meetings for prayer and praise; go to class-meeting to relate our ex-

periences; we would feel the quickening within us of the old time vigor and power. Make it the supreme object of each individual Christian life to win souls to Christ, and our membership will be built up as it can be in no other manner.

XIII.

“Let all the people praise thee.” *PSA. lxxvii, 3.*

PRAISE is essential to worship. Music is a powerful supplement to the preaching of the Gospel. Rightly conducted it will attract many who otherwise could not be reached. The Roman Catholic and Episcopal ritualist take advantage of the popular love of music, and make it the chief element in their worship. The sermon is secondary to the singing. In many instances the preacher is only an appendage of the choir. The house is crowded to hear the singing, but speedily empties before the sermon. We go to the other extreme; we magnify the sermon and lightly value the importance of song in worship. Our average church music has little that is attractive about it. Often, indeed, it is considered improper, if not wrong, to attempt to make it attractive. Congregational singing imparts a charm to religious service very little under-

stood because it is so badly managed. In most churches congregational singing is only nominal. It is the only kind of music worthy a place in divine worship. But congregational singing is absolutely dependent upon choral leading and instrumental accompaniment. Every congregation should make a thorough drill of its song service. A competent leader should be secured who, while thoroughly familiar with music, at the same time should have enough religion to keep musical effect secondary to the object of true worship. The pastor should be chorister in chief. Thorough musical training should find a place in the curriculum of theological study. There should be no possibility of a conflict between the pastor and the chorister. The former should have as exclusive control over the music to be sung as he has over the Scripture lesson to be read. A choir of sweet, powerful, well-trained voices is a necessity. The larger the choir, if well-balanced, the better. The musical portion of the services should be a varied selection of solos and choruses, reaching the climax in the shout of the whole congregation in a familiar hymn; all in the line of the theme of the sermon and skillfully arranged so as to produce the greatest religious impression. An instrument to aid the choir and accompany the congregation is a necessity. A pipe organ proportionate to

the size of the church is really the only instrument for Church purposes. An organist should be secured who is willing to fill a secondary place; the average organist is impressed with the importance of his position, and feels called upon to roar and thunder and whistle and shriek until you wonder whether you are in a church or a circus. The voluntaries are brilliant dashes from the opera or improvisations upon some popular melody, and far from creating a reverent or religious feeling in the listener. In many churches a pipe organ is an impossibility. The best substitute is that which the organ seeks to imitate. In every village there can be found persons who possess musical knowledge and familiarity with some musical instrument, who would be pleased to contribute their skill and knowledge to religious worship. A choir accompanied and supported by an orchestra containing cornets, clarionets, flutes, violins, as many or as few as circumstances might suggest, would impart a fascination and charm to the church services that would be surprising and very attractive. The church ought to be the musical center of every community. We have made a great mistake in giving up to the devil not only the best music, but the sweetest and most popular instruments. The author can speak from experience. For three years conducting religious

service in a large opera-house with a congregation rarely falling below a thousand and often reaching two thousand, he found it necessary to have instrumental aid in the service of song. A large choir, supported by a well-balanced and thoroughly drilled orchestra, accomplished the desired end with marvelous success. He has never heard any music so inspiring as the voices of the great multitude led by the choir and orchestra, all singing some old familiar hymn. Tact and perseverance in utilizing the material to be found in every community where there is a church would soon fill the deserted sanctuary with the indifferent, who would be delighted, profited, and saved.

XIV.

"I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."

I SAM. xxvi, 21.

THE desire for entertainment and amusement is legitimate and natural and should be gratified. To draw the line between proper and improper amusements is the province of the Church. Guided by the teaching of the divine word, wide experience, careful observation, and sober judgment, the pulpit should utter no uncertain sounds upon this question. Participation in or defense of amusements

characterized by the Church as questionable, or improper, if not wicked, by a Christian, is a genuine surprise not only to the Church but to the world. The most thoughtless worlding is surprised and shocked to meet at the theater or cross hands in the dance with a professed disciple of the Lord Jesus. Gratification at indorsement of his own folly cannot hide the shock to his sense of Christian consistency or propriety. The popular amusements of the hour are vicious and immoral. The ball-room, with all its charms of beauty and sounds of merriment and melody, is the anteroom to the house of shame. The pleasure of the dance is illicit and sensual. It is an open and undisguised effort to develop and gratify the basest passions of our nature. The charm of music and the fascination of motion blind the virtuous votaries of the dance to the indelicacies and indecencies, the improper and licentious familiarities, which would be tolerated nowhere else. Men do not dance with men nor women with women; they dance with each other. The charm lies in the permitted familiarity and personal contact. Could virtuous women read the thoughts or hear the coarse and vulgar speeches made by those who hold them in a close embrace as they whirl and leap around the room, they would not only burn with shame and indignation but

would resent the next invitation to dance as a gross personal insult.

The theater, with its glitter, and tinsel, and gorgeous display, has ever possessed an indescribable fascination. It is the charm of the serpent whose bite is death. The door of the theater is the open gate to hell. A portion of it is well called *the pit*. The modern drama is popular in proportion as it is evil in action, speech, or suggestion. The greatest admirers of the stage lament its tendency toward buffoonery and licentiousness; one of the greatest actors on the stage to-day will not permit his own daughter to attend promiscuously the better class of plays produced at the theater in which he earns his own triumph. The legitimate drama, without the attraction of a star of the first magnitude, is an utter failure. The play which fills the house to repletion and is honored with a long run is foolish or evil, and popular in proportion as it is either. Aside from the few great stars the persons who secure the most paying engagements are those who pander to the lowest passions of the people. Boston's *élite* and Harvard College do not honor even Booth or Janauschek as they do Lydia Thompson or Aimée. The popular play that is not based upon matrimonial infelicities or infidelities, seduction, or temptation to vice is the exception. It is

popular in proportion as it skirts the dangerous edge of impropriety in gesture, speech, or suggestion. The greatest danger of the theater is not the grossness of its vice, but its refinement; not its deformity, but its grace. Let me briefly illustrate by brief reference to three popular plays which may be taken as samples of the better class of plays presented upon the stage.

I attended a play in a theater of the first class. The character of the heroine was assumed by a lady of national renown, and said to be above reproach in her private life. The play was charming, the acting very fine. Not an improper word was uttered, and yet one scene, containing a whisper of vice as keen as a serpent's tooth, left a subtle venom which stings to-day. The heroine was entertaining her lover in her private room; tempted by her confiding affection he sought her honor. The passionate pleading of the man, the thrilling fervor of the woman, were so intense as to become realistic to the great audience, which applauded with a *furore* of enthusiasm. The young man, conquered by the pleading of his sweetheart, desisted from his dishonorable attempt. She professed to be so delighted at his *generosity* in ceasing to press his advantage that she compensated him for his disappointment by renewing with him more freely than

before her affectionate relations. Without this scene there was not an improper suggestion; and yet in this scene the play reached its climax, and was indebted to it for very much of its popularity. The thousands who have beheld this play have been taught, "it is not dishonorable to *attempt* evil, but to *accomplish* it." I attended the opera once, to hear a distinguished vocalist whose genius we all delight to honor. The audience was select, as the admission was high. The opera was received with undisguised delight. The plot was intrigue and counter-intrigue, all failing of accomplishment, of course. The husband and wife were true to each other; their lovers were pure only because the attempted crime was defeated by circumstances.

Camille is a licentious and indecent French novel which is found in no respectable library. No decent woman but would blush to be caught with it in her hand. Yet it is transformed into a play with its deformity and vice partially and artfully glossed, and given representation regularly at the best theaters. The character of the heroine is a favorite role with several distinguished actresses, who by their preference manifest a strange obliquity of moral vision, not to say lack of moral principle. The heroine is a vile strumpet. The plot of the play is laid in a house of ill-fame.

The incidents are such as grow out of the association of such characters as frequent such a place. That such a play can receive encouragement and indorsement in a Christian land is a stinging disgrace.

The clergy are sharply censured for daring to criticise the evils of the theater, because they are not theater-goers. You might as well charge the dentist with incapacity to pull a tooth because he was not crazy with the toothache. The clergy are not the only critics of the drama. The enormity of the evils that curse the stage is so apparent that its friends have been compelled to acknowledge it by seeking its reformation. Aside from a handful of clergymen of the liberal faith, who have indorsed the reform as very much needed, no sympathy has been expressed by Christian people for the quixotic venture. The reform desired may be understood when we remember that the first play presented under the auspices of the Theater Reform Association, and for its benefit, was *Rip van Winkle*, a glorification of shiftlessness and drunkenness. All Christians of evangelical faith, both clergy and laity, are fully convinced that the drama, like dancing, can be reformed only by annihilation.

The natural desire for entertainment which seeks gratification in the evil ways so seductively presented demands our attention. The

Church is criminal in confining itself to the care of the soul and neglecting or ignoring the needs of the body. It has the power in most communities to control the better class of amusements, and put the evil under the ban. The power should be fully exercised. If all Christians and lovers of virtue and morality were agreed, and aggressive, the ball-room and theater would languish and die for want of support. If we were wise we would manifest the bigotry and intolerance of our fathers; but let the iron hand which they laid upon the seeker for liberty in religion take by the throat the seducer to license in vice. Ostracize all participants in or supporters of shameful and vicious practices, socially, commercially, and politically; let the editor who panders to the vicious and depraved tastes of the wicked by advertising the charms of vice and soliciting its support send his paper to the brothel and bar-room, but not to a single decent, respectable, Christian household. If this policy were adopted the editorial tone of the modern press would be transfigured in twenty-four hours. Let the Church provide healthful and profitable amusements. Every religious society should have connected with it an organization for the development and cultivation of social interests and to provide lectures, readings, concerts, and literary entertainments. We have

so far revolted from worldly amusements that many of us have put under the ban all amusements. Card and billiard playing have become so wedded to evil that we denounce chess, checkers, dominoes, and croquet. The theatrical play is so vicious and harmful that we denounce tableaux and all kinds of personation. The indiscriminate commingling of the sexes in the *abandon* of the ball-room is so evil in tendency that we frown upon the freedom and hilarity of the social gathering. To enable us to judiciously select the hurtful from the harmful requires only average common sense. If we make our churches places toward which the people turn during the week for social pleasure, mental profit, and proper relaxation, the road will become so familiar and delightful that little effort will be required to secure their presence and attention upon the Sabbath at the religious service for spiritual profit.

XV.

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” PSA. cxxii, 1.

IF the question were asked of the average religious congregation, “How many invited some one to come with you to-day?” how many hands would be raised? Not one in a

hundred. The Christian who regularly, systematically and persistently invites others to worship with him is the marked exception to the general rule. If the church services are of the most ordinary interest, five persons thoroughly in earnest can double the average attendance in one year in the average church.

One man in one of our cities was so deeply impressed with the importance of inducing the great crowd of Sabbath-breakers to frequent the house of God that he resolved to do what he could toward it. He began personally to invite to his pew those he found strolling about on the Sabbath day. He was the means of leading one hundred young men to become attendants upon divine worship, many of whom were converted. A preacher mentioned this incident at one of his services; a little association was formed by eight or ten of his members, and in sixteen months they had induced two hundred persons to attend church. One of the invitation committee alone secured forty.

Every church ought to have an organization connected with it whose sole aim is to invite persons to attend divine worship. A committee of a dozen could thoroughly preach the Gospel in every house in any large town or small city in one year. By dividing the place into districts, and systematically visiting, street

by street and house by house, those who have no church home, cordially inviting to the house of God, and scattering religious literature, hundreds would be induced to go who never think of it. They say: "I stay at home because I am not invited." A committee of those who cannot find time to visit can supplement this work by making an individual and personal matter of invitation about their work or wherever they find non-church-goers; by reporting to the visiting committee the names and residences of those they have invited, the work can be followed up by others and cannot fail. This method has been of very great benefit in the ministry of the author. Within the past year very much of the success in filling our house is the direct result of personal solicitation. One man secured nearly every one in his room in the manufactory. Another at a recent service counted *twenty-one* young men present at an evening preaching service who came because he had pressed them. Another invited one of his shop-mates. He declined to go because his shoes leaked. "I will buy you a pair of overshoes if you will go." He then said his wife might not like it. "Let us go and ask her." Going to the house, the woman was found barefooted. Our shrewd and earnest brother said: "If you will not jaw your husband for going to meeting with me,

and if you will go once with him, I will buy you a pair of shoes." She promised to go, and not "jaw" her husband any more than she could help. The following Sunday evening I noticed by the smiling face of my brother that he was pleased. I went to him and said, "Mark, are your friends here?" He replied, with a smile that covered his whole face, "Yes, *six of them.*" He introduced the three men and their wives, who had come with him that inclement evening over a mile to a Protestant place of worship for the first time. They expressed themselves greatly interested, and promised to come again. The following Friday evening cottage-meeting the new-found soul was persuaded to seek Christ.

Tact and perseverance will never fail. Invite, urge, plead; refuse to take "no" for an answer; make an engagement to call and accompany the person to Church, and take him to your seat and introduce him to some one, but especially to the pastor, and you will be amazed at the result.

The principal objection that will be urged to this plan will be: "I have no adaptation to such work." If you have not, get it. God saved you to have your help in saving others. Where there is a will, a way will be found. If your child was drowning and you needed help, would you be too bashful to ask for it? If

you feel the value of souls you will not rest without doing all you can to save them. The secret of the difficulty always found in pressing this personal work is indifference. "As long as the preacher will feed me, and the Church will nurse me, I am content ; but to waken me from my dreaming, indolent childhood by requiring of me the labor of stalwart manhood is unpleasant and repugnant."

XVI.

"The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." LUKE xvi, 8.

"My success is owing to liberality in advertising."—BONNER.

"The road to fortune is through printer's ink."—BARNUM.

"Success depends upon a liberal patronage of printing offices."—ASTOR.

"Frequent and constant advertising brought me all I own."
—STEWART.

THESE are the words of men whose achievements and accumulations corroborate their testimony. Advertising is every-where acknowledged as a vital necessity to worldly success. The many floating epigrams upon this subject are well recognized and appreciated truisms.

"What is solitude?" a Sunday-school was once asked.

A bright lad immediately replied, "The store that does not advertise."

"Why is trying to do business without advertising like winking at some one in the dark?"

"You know what you are doing, but nobody else does."

These may well be applied to the average church with fitness and force. Most of our churches are conducted with studious secrecy as to what is to come until the service reveals it. It is a foolish mistake if not a criminal blunder. Were it known each week what was to be the theme for the coming Sabbath, such study and thought would be given to it that half the success would be achieved before the Sabbath came. The common topic of conversation in the field, by the roadside, in the shop, around the family circle, would be the sermon to come. The announcement, and the talk about it, would advertise the service so that many who otherwise would not go to church would be induced to attend. When the preacher arises to present his views and the teaching of the Bible concerning a subject which for a week has excited the interest of every one of his congregation, he finds it easy to preach and hold their attention. Ignorance is the parent of indifference. The more a person knows about the subject to be

discussed the closer attention will he give to its treatment.

The columns of the secular as well as the religious press should be utilized wherever possible to attract attention to divine worship. Sunday advertising receives abundant criticism and censure. It is denounced and rebuked as the hateful and hurtful habit of the hour. Scathing and humorous attacks are made upon it by those whose ministry is ineffective because it lacks sensation. If the keen critics would exercise half the effort and ingenuity to attract the people to their churches that they waste in useless criticism of how others succeed, their effectiveness would be more than doubled. He who speaks regularly to an empty house is poorly fitted to criticise the methods of his brother whose house is full. There is a limit to sensationalism. When it becomes drivel or bombast it ceases to be sensational and becomes ridiculous. What is novel is not necessarily nonsense. To announce that you have something to interest the people at your church next Sunday may be novel, but it is wisdom, not folly. To mention your subject in advance is by very many esteemed silly, if not improper; but the objectors never think of having a lecture without announcing it, and what it is to be about. To select as topics for an-

nouncement strange and unusual themes receives unsparing censure. Yet the marvelous power of the preaching of Jesus lay largely in the novelty of his theme. His subjects, compared to those of his coadjutors, were as eccentric as those of Spurgeon and Talmage today. He talked simply, pointedly, and directly about the little familiar sights and experiences of people in actual life. While the other preachers despised and denounced him he enchanted the multitude, and they followed him every-where enraptured with his teaching. Bible preaching is novel and eccentric. Prophets and apostles alike studied thrilling effect in every message. Peter's first sermon was a sensational presentation and startling application of the great tragedy of the crucifixion. Paul, who was a master of oratory, and not dependent upon the tricks of the mountebank for an audience, sought out how to be all things to all men that thereby he might win some. His tact and ingenuity, manifested in his sermon on Mars' hill about "The Unknown God," were the characteristics of his wonderfully successful ministry.

But it is objected that this method panders to the curiosity of the thoughtless. If they can be reached in no other way, that is the gospel way. John the Baptist was the Talmage of his age. He wore a strange and unministerial

garb; his diet was savage; his personal appearance wild; his style of speech foreign and fervid. He produced a remarkable sensation. All Judea went out to hear him. His solemn yet fiery eloquence vivified a half-forgotten dream of the past. He was Elijah. By his very peculiarities he accomplished in a few weeks his mission. Instead of hunting a congregation, his congregations hunted him. We cannot doubt that the leading and controlling impulse which induced the multitude to seek him and hear his words was pure curiosity. Jesus recognizes this, and does not rebuke it. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" he asks, and answers it by commending the strange preacher as more than a prophet. "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist."

There are two classes in every community. To say to one, "If you will come to our church next Sunday you will hear something that will interest and profit you," is enough to insure their presence. To the other class such invitations will prove of no avail. To induce them to attend, you must convince them something unusual is to take place. With them interest begins in curiosity. To make no attempt to excite their curiosity is to leave them without the Gospel. If you secure their attendance once, and they are

interested, it will be easier to induce them to come again. The ministrations of the pulpit must be novel and unusual if public interest in them is to be maintained. When people begin to say, "I do not care to go to church; I have heard the preacher several times, and it is the same thing over and over," you need not wonder at empty seats. Make each sermon a surprise; let each service rival the preceding; avoid humdrum monotony. Even hungry persons will tire of stale bread; at your gospel feast let the Bread of Life be fresh and warm. Use the worldly wisdom of the authors of serial stories: stop when others want you to go on. Seek to fascinate as well as feed. Careful and thoughtful effort and planning in this direction will make it comparatively easy for the average preacher and Church to make the coming of the hour for worship longed for, and the service eagerly attended.

Newspaper advertising is not enough. This is the age of printer's ink. No man can successfully do business to-day and ignore the printer. Posters, circulars, and cards fill a very important place in worldly enterprise. The circus, theater and lyceum spare neither pains nor expense to inform every body of their attractions. The shrewd trader informs the whole community when he sells his old stock at cost and when his new stock has ar-

rived. We need to-day in religious work the enterprise and push of the worldly wise. Every phase and movement of our Church work should be forced upon the attention of the community. If those we desire to reach are kept intelligently acquainted with our plans and labors; if they are invited to our churches with the same earnestness and persistence shown in worldly affairs by Christian people we will find the problem, "How to reach the masses," easily solved. It seems a little farcical that we can be enterprising in managing a lyceum, or concert, or church sociable, and shiftless and stupid in our main work of bringing souls to Christ. The salvation of souls should be a business and not a mere sentiment. As we travel over the country we find staring us in the face, on board, stump, tree, rock, on the road-side, in the valley, on the mountain side, by the sea-shore, numerous mystic words. They are the marks of business ingenuity and enterprise. When the Christian becomes as earnest for God and souls as he is for himself, "sozodont" will give way to "salvation," "hair restorer" to "hallelujah," "bitters" to "Bible," and "hats" to "heaven." Rocks, fences and trees that now speak of earthly vanities will sing of eternal realities.

XVII.

“Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” LUKE xiv, 23.

WHEN you have exhausted your resources still there will be room, and many who have not been reached. If they will not come to you, you must carry the gospel to them. We have become so decorous in our methods that these suggestions to many will savor only of folly. After you have tried to the utmost advertisements, tracts, invitations—printed and personal—you will fail to get the attention of many whose souls Christ died to save. For reasons that need no explanation a large class of our people have a prejudice against our churches. They will not attend divine service in them whatever may be the attraction. To such the gospel must be preached by the way-side, on the street corner, at the sea-shore, in the mountain, in the woods. A systematic and judicious out-door campaign for one summer, followed by popular revival meetings in halls and theaters in the winter, would revolutionize the country religiously. Going to lecture not long since in a small village I noticed in the public square a man surrounded by a large crowd. He had a bright light over his head and was declaiming at the top of his

voice. He was urging the crowd to buy what he had to sell: "something which every family needed, and only ten cents apiece, or three for a quarter." *He was selling knife-sharpeners.* Out of door peddling is a familiar sight during the warm season in every city and village. If we were as anxious to supply the churchless portion of our communities with the gospel as these street venders are to sell their wares we could monopolize the public squares and street corners and find interested and appreciative audiences. Close the church one half the Sabbath day, and with a few singers select a desirable location where it will be easy to gather a crowd, and sing, and pray, and preach the gospel. Hundreds who will laugh at you will listen and may be saved. But, it may be urged, our camp-meetings do this out-door work. The crowd nowadays goes to camp-meeting but one or two days during the meeting, and then the fascination of the out-door life so diverts attention from the object of the meeting that generally there is little practical benefit derived from the week. Were the camp-meeting portable, and, by the use of a large tabernacle, moved from city to city and village to village through each district, under the supervision of the presiding elder, its power would be increased a hundredfold.

Plan a systematic and aggressive campaign.

Select the places where the work is most needed. Divide the work and give each man that to do which he can best do. Let the preaching be about the necessity of seeking salvation through faith in Christ *now; to-day*. Found every sermon upon the one theme. Make the services attractive by the best music, both instrumental and vocal, you can secure. Canvass the neighborhood round about thoroughly, conversing with every soul about religion. Scatter religious literature like leaves. Make the revival the chief topic of conversation on the farm, by the roadside, in the shop, and by the fireside. Follow up this campaign by revival services in the largest public hall to be obtained. One wise head, warm heart and strong hand, which every presiding elder ought to have, would in one campaign revolutionize a district as ten years' ordinary church work would fail to do. In these days, when debate about the benefit of the presiding eldership inevitably begets distrust of its usefulness, is there not possibility of removing the opprobrium hanging over this office by making the incumbent, as in primitive times, a presiding revivalist and giving him the means of visiting the out-lying and necessitous portions of the work in this evangelistic work? The expense would be trifling compared with the results. If we can find money to evangelize the heathen

we certainly ought to be able to do the same for our neighbors. This work is distinctly Methodistic. The moment we unite with other Churches, whose methods are antagonistic to ours, we are shorn of our power to a very great extent. Methodist preaching of Methodist doctrine, supplemented by Methodist exhortation and singing, will move the masses today as it did when our fathers, with Bible and hymn book, on horseback, swept over the land like flaming torches, kindling everywhere they went living fires which still are burning. The explosive enthusiasm of the fathers is not hereditary. The sons do not shout; they do not flame; but they can be the spark which shall fire others. When a lad I delighted with my comrades in celebrating our national anniversary with the noisy fire-cracker. Punk was as necessary as the fire-works themselves. The slow match did not sputter or fizz, but simply kept the fire alive to explode the cracker. If we do not shout ourselves, let us have so much of the fire in our hearts that all who come in contact with us shall *go off*.

XVIII.

“He brought me forth also into a large place.” PSALM
xviii, 19.

AFTER a great battle, before the smoke-cloud has lifted, exaggerated, false, or mistaken reports are borne far and wide upon rumor's sweeping wings. There is no appeal but to history. It disproves the falsehood, and corrects the exaggeration or error. The following pages are history.

In the spring of 1875 the author was transferred from the New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the New Hampshire Conference, and was appointed pastor of the newly organized Tabernacle Church in Manchester, N. H.,*at the earnest solicitation and urgent request of the Presiding Elder of the Concord District. “Music Hall,” seating in the neighborhood of one thousand persons, was secured as a place of worship. In all the city there was not a place of worship opened Sunday evening but for the social meeting, which in all the churches was very thinly attended. The greater portion of the population never entered a place of worship. A series of popular Sunday-evening services was inaugurated. The result was simply amazing. “Music Hall” was crowded to over-

flowing. "Smyth's Opera-house," seating over fifteen hundred, was secured, and packed every Sabbath evening for months. Upon special occasions, after all the standing room was filled, hundreds were turned away for lack of room. Gen. Natt. Head, now Governor of the State, on one occasion with his wife rode eight miles in a sleigh to attend one of the services. Going to the entrance an hour before the time services were announced, he found many already waiting for the doors to be opened. He was soon in the midst of a dense throng, packing the halls and vestibules of the Opera-house and crowded out into the street. He looked at his watch to see how long it took to fill the house when the doors were opened. In five minutes the house was packed.

At the close of the second year Bishop Peck visited Manchester and preached on Sabbath evening. For the first time in the history of the city a representative Methodist had the ear of the city. Before the service Gov. Cheney, Ex-Gov. Smyth and Judge Cross, three of the most influential citizens, met the bishop in the parlor of the Opera-house, and voluntarily gave the highest testimonial to the influence and beneficial results of these Sunday evening meetings. The bishop delivered one of his most powerful sermons to an audience filling

the Opera-house, and comprising such a representation of the business, professional, and social elements of the city as rarely ever is gathered in that place at a religious service. Going from the hall he said again and again, "What a wonderful congregation!" Before reaching Manchester he had been impressed with the rumor that the service was secular and sensational rather than religious. But the testimony borne by persons above partisan feeling and his own observation convinced him he was mistaken. He said, "The methods are not what I would use; but perhaps without them I could not accomplish the wonderful results. I dare not criticise. Work in your own way."

The following extracts from letters and press notices will give a fair indication of the general estimation of the work and its results.

Col. John B. Clarke, the veteran editor of the "Daily Mirror," the leading journal in the State, says:—

I know Mr. Hamilton well, and know the size of the audiences that usually attend meeting in New Hampshire. No settled pastor in the State ever had such crowds to hear him. For nearly one hundred Sunday evenings he has filled the largest hall in the State, to its utmost capacity, with appreciative hearers.

Gov. P. C. Cheney, "Centennial Governor," in a personal letter, says:—

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I am very sorry to learn that by the rules of your denomination you are compelled to leave your work here so soon. Your residence in our city, although quite brief, (three years,) has been in the highest degree creditable to yourself and useful to our community, thereby making your absence a cause of general regret.

MANCHESTER PRESS.

Mr. Hamilton is a bold, aggressive speaker, who allows no opportunity for attacking vice, wherever it may be found, to pass him by ; and he deals it such sledge-hammer blows there is no mistaking his meaning.—*Sunday Globe*.

When you see a church and society seeking larger accommodations, doubling its congregation, and all that with a minister who is called an incendiary, and who throws things around regardless of who gets hit, it is a sign that somebody means business.—*Daily Union*.

Coming here a few months ago an entire stranger to our people, he organized the Tabernacle Church, occupied Music Hall till his audience became too large for it, and then moved to where he speaks to-night, the largest hall in the State. His following now is the largest of any public speaker in the city.—*Daily Mirror*.

Rev. Mr. Hamilton has chosen a line of work entirely different from that pursued by other pastors in the city. Disagreeing with him as we do in some of his methods, we accord him full credit for sincerity, honesty of purpose, and commendable perseverance. That he has proven a firebrand, stirring to flame all the active elements of disorder and crime in opposition to his work, is by no means discreditable to him—rather it speaks volumes in behalf of his boldness and sincerity. Were he a hypocrite, his crusade would have awakened in the breasts of rum-sellers no feeling but that of contempt ; were his efforts as feeble as those of the majority of the so-called ministers of God, they would have cared no more for them than they do for the summer breeze. But the

rum-power of Manchester both fear and hate him, and nothing that we could say would add to the praise this single fact accords him.—*Saturday Night Dispatch.*

XIX.

“And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped.” 2 CHRON. xxvi, 15.

IT will be asked, What was the secret of this marvelous success? It was God using a weak instrument. The human share in the work was small and effective only through the presence, power, and blessing of the Holy Spirit. The services were held in a large hall, and every seat was free. The music was congregational singing, led by a large chorus and orchestra. The grand effect of many hundred voices singing a familiar hymn was charm enough alone to fill the great audience room. The orchestral selections were of a high order, and finely rendered. The singing of the choir and an occasional solo by the pastor broke the monotony of the service, and added to the interest. The preaching was plain, pungent, and practical. It had to do largely with local affairs and incidents of daily occurrence. Whatever possessed the popular mind was seized upon and made the basis for the annunciation of a divine truth. Aside from the truth of the

old saying, that "Where a crowd goes a crowd will go," the vital secret consisted in liberal and persistent advertising. The city press found it to their interest to report very largely what was said. Frequent criticism of the methods adopted and words uttered appeared. With but one exception the criticism was fair and honorable; and that exception was the best advertisement of all. One journal felt it to be its duty, although edited by Christian men, to malign and misrepresent for partisan purposes all that was said and done. Every criticism was welcomed and approved. The most exaggerated served a good purpose. The character of the paper which developed a conscientious objection to ever making a fair or true statement was such that its opposition was the climax of compliment. Its praise would have been fatal; its denunciation was worth a fair price per line. By posters and flyers the community were forced to give attention to what the Church proposed to do.

The lax sentiment with regard to temperance which prevailed in the city compelled special effort in that direction. There was a rigid Prohibitory Law upon the statute-books, but it was shamefully ignored. The city never had men of sufficient integrity or moral courage in any branch of its city government to regard their official oath

enough to give an enforcement of the Prohibitory Law other than spasmodic, farcical, and for partisan effect.

Political power was so evenly divided and political feeling so bitter that such an aggressive factor as the liquor league held the balance of power solely because of the indifference of the Christian and temperance people. The city marshal had the impudence to report but one arrest for liquor-selling in a year while hundreds were openly engaged in the business, and the principal ones had the audacity to advertise their saloons in the city Directory. The principal objective point aimed at was the education of public sentiment upon this question.

Early in the campaign the author was plainly and profanely told to confine his efforts to the Churches; as there was not one in the city free from the entanglement of the traffic. Challenging proof of the assertion, he was furnished facts which showed there was too much truth in the charge. He called attention to the hypocrites by name, and announced their Church relations. He sought to be impartial, and thus honored representatives of the Baptist, Congregationalist, and Methodist Churches. Of course such an impertinent and officious meddling with other people's business created no small stir. A bitter and personal newspaper controversy followed with one of

the victims, a gentleman of high business and social position who, while professing to be a Christian and temperance man, was acting as agent for a house of ill-fame and drinking saloon. After the battle had ended by the retreat of the champion of the bawdy house the cloud lifted, and the voice of the city was pronounced in an unmistakable manner on the side of Christian and temperance consistency.

The effort of Rev. Mr. Hamilton to purge the Churches of this city from all taint of connection with the liquor traffic is one which, by its very boldness, deserves and should receive the support of all earnest temperance men. It strikes at the root of the disease, and though to many who believe in smoothing over the sins of the Church members, while they deal sledge-hammer blows at sins outside the Church, the method may seem harsh, yet it cannot be denied that in the Church is where the severest justice should be meted out to those who cover their violation of law and of their professed principles with the cloak of religion. What the end will be no one knows. Mr. Hamilton has undertaken a herculean task, the result of which he cannot but await with anxiety. He has the sympathy of his own Church and that of a large portion of other Churches in the city, but the active support of his brother pastors we are afraid will be almost wholly denied him. The old way is so much easier and more comfortable, it is so much easier to glide along in the well-worn ruts, that few will have the courage to break away, and, girding up their loins for the conflict, attack the devil in their own churches.—*Saturday Night Dispatch.*

The above editorial fairly voices the public sentiment of the better portion of the community at the time.

XX.

“[They] took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, . . . and set all the city on an uproar.” ACTS xvii, 5.

THE reform movement accomplished a great work. Hundreds were induced to sign the pledge. The author heartily engaged in the work, and contributed largely to the success. The movement was based alone upon moral suasion, and confined itself to the work of redeeming the drunkard. The author, while thoroughly indorsing moral suasion as the only possible agent to reform the drunkard, advocated the absolute necessity of applying legal suasion to the drunkard maker to secure the fruits of the victory so grandly won. Strange to say, this common-sense proposition was repelled by the leaders of the temperance reform, and scouted as detrimental and dangerous to the reform movement. Enforcement of the law was claimed to be the duty of the authorities and not of individuals. Political partisanship, dread of the strength of the liquor power and pretended doubt of the practicability of the attempt combined to discredit and overthrow the legal suasion movement. To test the law, measure the resources of the liquor league and establish a precedent, the author personally prosecuted several of the leading liquor sellers. The whole city was

stirred. The saloon-keepers as a unit resisted. Brilliant and astute attorneys defended the criminals, and sought by every possible device to escape conviction. Temperance men sneered or reviled; reformed men denounced. The wriggling criminals threatened. The author was privately notified of a projected personal assault upon him. He announced to a congregation of two thousand, upon reception of the information, that the assailants would do well to be ready for the other world; he would do what he could to help them into it. The assault was never attempted. Threats, jeers, and curses were unavailing. Every man was convicted, and several hundred dollars in fines and costs were collected. The share belonging by legal provision to the prosecutor was not claimed. The author paid his own expenses. A few selections from the press will give an idea of the public sentiment:—

Mr. Hamilton lays the traps that catch the flies, and hovers around the court-room, collecting and keeping together the witnesses, and seeing that none of them are spirited away or affected with any weakness of the backbone; giving points to counsel, and making such suggestions as to the conduct of the case as seem to him necessary for its success. Beset with difficulties and annoyances of all kinds, he is active and untiring in his work, never discouraged, no matter how hopeless his case may appear, and looking more like an attorney than a minister of the Gospel. While his success in enforcing the Prohibitory Law has been thus far any thing but flattering, and must have very much shaken his confidence in politi-

cians, whatever their political complexion may be, he seems to lose no faith in the justness of his cause or its final triumph.—*Sunday Globe.*

While the excitement in regard to the Morse liquor case was at its height, a gentleman of this city looked into a store where Rev. Mr. Hamilton was standing, and spoke his name. Mr. Hamilton came forward from the dim light of the interior and asked what was wanted. "O, nothing in particular," replied the man; "only I had never seen you to know you, and I wanted to be able to recognize you when you come into my place searching for rum." "O, certainly, certainly," replied Mr. Hamilton, stepping out upon the sidewalk. "Take a good square look at me. I am never ashamed to allow myself to be seen." The gent seemed satisfied and turned away, but in the evening he received Mr. Hamilton's photograph, with his compliments, and the hope the recipient would know him when they again met. We think he will.—*Saturday Night Dispatch.*

It is somewhat amusing to hear those parties who have been so long railing at Rev. Mr. Hamilton for preaching without practicing, now turn around and cry that he is "out of his sphere," that he is meddling with what don't concern him, and the like. The fact is, Mr. Hamilton's course has been consistent throughout. He fought for the cause of temperance from the pulpit as no other pastor in Manchester has, and when the proper time came the rum-power found he was just as ready with blows as with words. He should have the active co-operation of every lover of temperance in the city. Of one thing all can rest assured: having put his hand to the plow, he will not turn back nor give up the contest until something definite comes of it—either a complete victory or an entire failure. The latter we don't believe is possible.—*Saturday Night Dispatch.*

In commenting upon the author's reply to a criticism upon his liquor prosecutions, the Concord "Daily Monitor" said:—

We recognize in the author of the above letter a man of sincere and profound convictions, who possesses the physical and moral courage to maintain them at all times. We respect him accordingly. We may mistrust his judgment, but never his motives. We recognize also that in this great temperance reformation he is not far from the kingdom. Mistaken as to methods, or, rather, too impatient over their slow operation, we cannot doubt that his purpose is one single to the end which all temperance men desire ; namely, the utter disuse of alcohol as a beverage.

XXI.

“ With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment : . . . he that judgeth me : is the Lord.” I COR. iv, 3, 4.

IT would be very strange if three years spent in as aggressive a campaign as the previous chapters have indicated should not awaken most bitter and unsparing criticism and censure. This closing chapter may be fittingly occupied in presenting a few of the very many received. Without them it will be impossible to understand the difficulties met with and the obstacles which were surmounted.

One of the city pastors who aspired to the position of champion of the “ other side ” was especially free in his comments. He appeared as the advocate and mouth-piece of the infidel

league in their attempts to remove the Bible from the public schools. In the height of the temperance reform he eloquently exposed the "fallacies of total abstinence." His advanced and demoralizing sentiments received unsparing criticism and ridicule. He met argument with sneer and publicly advertised the tabernacle services as a "Sunday evening circus."

A brief quotation from a story written by a prominent citizen and published in a city paper may prove of interest.

The story represented a young man who had inherited a tendency to nervous disease and had been addicted to the use of stimulants. He had been induced by his sweetheart to sign the pledge and join the reform club. When the pamphlet on the "fallacies of total abstinence" appeared he was so impressed by it that he announced his determination to withdraw from the club and practice the gospel which the preacher had so eloquently advocated. His sweetheart induced him, before he carried out his determination, to hear Mr. Hamilton's reply to the pamphlet.

"O, Edward, I did trust that you had the moral courage to keep your pledge regardless of the false teachings of others, however exalted their position. Your family history teaches you that in total abstinence lies your only safety. If you yield to the teachings of

this false prophet, this *Reverend* who does *not* preach God's truth, and give up your pledge, you will be sure to fall and bring sorrow to the hearts that love you, even as—as your poor father did, who almost broke your poor mother's heart."

In reply to his argument quoted from the pamphlet in favor of the moderate and temperate use of stimulants, she replied:—

"The temperate use of *poisons* as a drink! This *man of God* letting down the bars at which opening you are so ready to enter! O, Edward, be a man among men, and do not yield your convictions of right so readily at the say of any one man, even though he may be clothed with the ministerial garb of authority. He is unworthy of his calling; he is not deserving of any following."

At this moment they reached the hall which, as Clara had prophesied, was filled to overflowing. As the young defender of temperance proceeded with his argument, now unraveling some skillfully woven web of sophistry and exposing its inconsistencies, now taking the apparently plausible theory of the necessity of artificial stimulants, and stripping it of its beautiful and attractive vestments and exposing its practical workings in all their hideous deformity, and, again, bringing to the attention of the audience proofs of the

strength of his position and his deductions from irrefutable sources, Clara stole an occasional glance at Edward's countenance to see if she could tell how he was affected by the argument. But as he was apparently too deeply interested to notice her she wisely kept silent until the lecture closed and they were wending their way homeward.

"Well, Edward, what do you think now?"

"I think Mr. Hamilton is right and his arguments irrefutable. I was a blind fool," he added, a little bitterly, "to be so led away from what I felt in my heart all the time was the only safe way; and yet the arguments of Rev. Mr. — are plausible; they are alluring to a young man who has no deep settled convictions on the question of intemperance, and if spread broadcast through the State there is no telling the amount of injury they may do. Many a young man, like myself, being charmed by the beauty and eloquence of the language, will fail to discover the serpent concealed within and be led to follow a course which cannot but result in his final ruin. I wish every young man in the land could have heard the lecture to-night."

The "Daily Union," in announcing a series of sermons to be delivered by the author, upon "Methodism," said: "To say the truth we are very glad to know that he has reached such

calm waters in his morning discourses. There is something to admire in the life of a spiritual Ishmaelite whose hand is against every man and every man's hand against him, but it must be a severe strain upon one's mental and physical nature to sustain so unequal a contest." These are the words of the organ of "rum and reform," when sober. It would be hard to believe that the same paper, unless drunken, could contain the following: "The Tabernacle pulpit, which is at present set up in Smyth's Hall, is the stand from which every Sunday evening is dispensed a very weak sort of soup compounded of religion, politics, and fiction, highly seasoned with vanity and egotism. It is the only place of amusement open on Sunday evening, and is, therefore, usually well-filled."

This called out the following ringing rebuke from "The Dispatch," unsolicited and unexpected:—

For the sake of our city's good name we rejoice that such journalism as that sampled above is rare, and also that it is confined to the organ of pro-rum-anti-reform-democracy in Manchester. When a paper goes out of its way to insult not Mr. Hamilton, for he probably cares less for the "Union's" criticism than the "Dispatch" does, if possible, but to insult the Church and congregation that gathers weekly to listen to their pastor, by belittling his efforts, maligning his intentions, and deriding his methods of work, is not only unchristian, but it is ungentlemanly, uncalled for, and utterly unworthy a paper which represents a party so loudly ringing the changes

upon reform as does the Democratic party. A paper that so basely truckles to the very worst and lowest elements in society, that decries every effort for the suppression of the crime of liquor-selling for the plain reason that it draws largely from that source for its support, is deserving of and will eventually receive the condemnation of the community. We are glad that there is but one paper in Manchester that has sunk so low as to be guilty of such a contemptible specimen of journalism.

The unpardonable sin the author committed was in not using his influence to turn into an independent political channel the tide of temperance reform and insure the success of the party of "rum and reform." He declined not only the good advice of the interested politicians, but the offer of a liberal sum to enter the campaign and deliver stump speeches in aid of prohibition, to be paid out of the Democratic campaign fund. In the last city election he was solicited by a prominent local politician to call a caucus after the complete fiasco which followed the attempted organization of a citizen's party, with the offer of payment of all bills. He declined to sell out for campaign expenses. This will explain the following editorial moralizing in a report of the prohibitory convention :—

The proceedings show that the smart little pastor of the Tabernacle Church in this city got himself well to the front, as usual, and with the purpose of bridling and directing the convention. He succeeded, in a measure; and those who know his management here can easily predict what will be-

come of a temperance movement that he bestrides. He has successfully ridden into the ground the Prohibitory movement, and the Reform Club started a year ago in this city, and if permitted, will speedily ride the Prohibitory party of the State into the same hole. At first his efforts to lead and manage the movements in this city were thought to spring from the vanity and self-conceit which are the inherent weaknesses of his nature ; but longer and closer observation of his course have left little doubt in the minds of many that he is quite as much in the service of the Republican party and its political managers as he is devoted to his self-aggrandisement. His efforts have been effectually directed to support the Republican party, and to convince temperance men that they should be satisfied with the modicum of prohibition that party finds it to its advantage to practice. And his efforts for that party have been such as to fairly entitle him to share in the funds lodged with the treasurer of the executive committee to be placed "where they will do the most good."—*Daily Union*.

No word was said in all the three years which were so flattering and complimentary as those above. They freely acknowledge a usefulness and success which exceeded the author's most hopeful fancy and desire. These words of censure and exaggeration were caught up, far and wide, by those who were ignorant of the facts, or the character of the revilers. Where both were known the most bitter and unscrupulous attacks invariably advertised and advanced that which they sought to overthrow. But that they produced an unfavorable impression in many minds abroad many things have revealed to the author. When, on account of the hard times and the cut down in

wages the Church, composed almost entirely of working people, became financially embarrassed and he sought engagements to lecture in the interest of the Church, the following letter was received from a brother pastor. The original is carried as a charm against pride and vainglory:—

DEAR SIR:—In answer to your circular I would say that in my opinion you lack too many of the elements of a man and a minister for me to desire you as an instructor of my people. The puffs you extract from newspapers indicate great ability, but your selection from your own sermon is very flat. There is a suspicion abroad that you inspire, if you do not write, these pieces in the papers about yourself and your works. You are a man of unbounded self-confidence, but whether you do more good than harm is a matter on which there may be room for doubt and debate.

Yours, etc.,

A. G. F.

Nov., 1877.

This work would be incomplete without a reference to another attempt, which is a revelation of indescribable infamy upon the part of its originators. During the aggressive campaign I have briefly sketched, several letters were received, purporting to be from love-smitten women inviting to a correspondence, and pointing plainly to an intrigue if desired. They were dismissed as transparent folly at the time, but later developments proved them to be part of a diabolical plan to compromise the author's integrity. He was invited with great urgency to visit a woman at a certain

place. The locality of the house was of such a character as to excite suspicion, but the message, left in his absence, was so urgent it was feared it was a case of sickness; and as it was daylight the visit was made. He was received in a private room by a woman partially *en dishabille*. When the reason for the invitation was asked she began nervously to talk about a remote subject, as if to gain time. The author curtly said he was in a hurry, and, failing to get an explanation, in spite of the urgent invitations not to be in a hurry, left. It was afterward ascertained the woman was the mistress of a prominent liquor seller. Another woman confessed to having been offered fifty dollars to pretend sickness and request a visit, and compromise the author by actions which were to be interrupted by the sudden appearance of a third party. She indignantly spurned the offer with contempt. Another effort was made which culminated in an attempt at blackmail. The services of a lawyer were secured and the effort defied. Failing in this, the parties made a pretended confession to some Methodist preachers, and on the evidence of a woman of self-confessed vile character, the author was arraigned twice and tried for immorality. The prosecution was managed with ingenuity, skill, and the pertinacity of the criminal lawyer. Although in an eccle-

siastical trial we reverse the methods and processes of criminal law, and compel the accused not only to disprove his guilt but prove his innocence beyond a doubt, a unanimous verdict of acquittal was rendered by both courts after a long and searching investigation.

At the end of his three years' pastorate the author was transferred to Maine, and appointed to the Hammond-street Church in the city of Lewiston. As a result of the adoption of the methods herein discussed very considerable success has already been realized. The city being under the clean and wholesome influence of the Maine Law, without an open bar, effort has been confined almost entirely to the so-called legitimate work of the ministry. Thus, robbed of the sensational effects of public controversy, the work has not varied largely from that of the average church.

A beautiful church situated one side of the center of population, with a small congregation steadily growing smaller, has been filled so as to necessitate seating the gallery for special occasions. The regular attendance has been doubled and the financial condition revolutionized. At the end of the first year one who has had opportunity to ascertain the facts writes :—

He has supplied a church which had very much declined spiritually, financially, and numerically; and by the blessing

of God upon his zealous efforts, he has completely resuscitated the Church and brought them to a safe basis ; having inspired them with faith in God's providence and confidence in themselves. He is very unique as well as original in drawing a congregation from the streets, as also in preaching to them gospel truth after he gets them to the house of worship."

A TEMPERANCE ADDRESS.*

Several years ago a little village on the river Rhine nestled at the foot of a towering mountain peak. A tourist ascending the mountain discovered that the crag over-hanging the valley was slowly separating from the rest of the mountain. He hastened to the village and graphically related his discovery and described the impending danger. His startling tale was received with "poohs," and shrugs of the shoulder. It was an old story. It had lost its terrors. Succeeding tourists reported the crevice was slowly but surely widening ; still to all suggestions of removal the villagers turned a deaf ear.

Not many months since the daily papers announced with startling head-lines that that over-hanging cra had fallen, and the village was buried beneath the avalanche of earth and rocks which had been threatening it so long. Many of the inhabitants were killed as they endeavored to escape ; many others were buried in the ruins of their houses without a moment's warning.

We stand unconcerned to-day face to face with a death-dealing disaster far more dangerous than that which overshadowed the little Rhine village. It threatens not one community but the whole nation. To all warnings we turn a deaf ear. We spurn the zealous alarmist as a noisy hare-brained fanatic. That there is danger all admit. We feel the chill breath of the coming storm fanning our cheeks. Self-blinded as to whence it comes, we make little or no preparation to meet its fury.

* Delivered at the National Temperance Camp-Meeting at Old Orchard, Maine, 1878, in response to Gov. Connor, of Maine.

Depression in trade, stagnation of commerce and paralysis of agricultural and mechanical industry are combining to create a tempest which will overwhelm the nation if we sit with folded hands. The crash of crumbling fortunes as echoed in the long list of bankruptcies is but the occasional lightning flash, the premonition of the nearing storm.

But a few months ago we caught a glimpse of a black cloud faint lined in the horizon, whose dim shadow had power to cause the heart-throb to cease, the cheek to pale, and the brain to reel. An ignorant railroad brakeman in a remote part of the country gave the signal; in answer, a gaunt specter called "the Commune," a hag of foreign birth and hideous mien, sprang with a bound as if from the ground full-grown and well armed. With the fury and fierce energy of delirium or despair it laid its hands upon the great arteries of commercial life. Reckless men and unsexed women bearing the torch and bludgeon thronged the streets of the great cities, and boldly attempted to overthrow and revolutionize the foundations of social and business life. The iron hand of law somewhat tardily crushed out the incipient revolution. The evil spirit is overthrown but not cast out. Its scouts and sentinels parade and patrol the land, only waiting for a fitting opportunity for the completion of its mad and violent schemes. Social economists who have had a faint glimmer of the possibilities of this phenomenon if given a favorable opportunity can think of the past but with bated breath, as having concealed a peril and disaster dark, astounding and unfathomable. The Nihilist of Russia, the Socialist of Germany, the Communist of France and the Kearneyite of America are the stormy petrels riding on the wave; not the authors but the harbingers of approaching danger. The most inexperienced landsman, when he sees the distant lightning's gleam, and hears the faint mutter of thunder, and feels the white caps rising under the freshening breeze and beating the vessel's side, knows a storm is brewing; but he has learned only what the barometer told the captain and the instinct of the sailor discovered long ago. The barometer has been agitated

for years. The keen instinct of those few gifted souls which God gives every generation, who with the ken of the seer grasp in the twinkling of an eye the portents of the future and write its mysteries in letters of living light, have long poured their gloomy prophecies in our unwilling ears. The masses, generally careless and thoughtless of future safety or danger, are beginning to manifest a strange and mysterious uneasiness. Our leaders are unable to avert the danger, because either ignorantly or intentionally they mistake its source.

The Republican says: "There is danger in the air, but it is not of my making. The black clouds which seem to shade the horizon are but the smoke clouds of the battle-field, where we have just saved the nation from rebels and Democrats. They will disperse, and we will have a clear sky if we can only keep out of power our opponents, who are responsible for the danger."

The Democrat paints with vivid colors the possibilities of the wide-reaching disaster which threatens to engulf us, and unsparingly denounces it as the direct product of radical rascality. A complete change of crew from captain to deck-hand will alone enable us to escape the hidden reefs and make the safe harbor.

The Greenbacker comes shouting himself hoarse with delight at his discovery of a panacea for the blasting curse of political corruption and selfish monopoly; he urgently advocates sending into the clouds a hot-air paper balloon to draw the teeth of the threatening hurricane.

To a certain extent each is right and, at the same time, all are wrong. The cause alleged by each has contributed very materially to the danger in view, but only secondarily. The primal source is so plain none but the self-blinded can fail to see. Take the drink curse out of politics, out of business, and out of social life and you have gone far toward the final solution of all these vexing problems.

Do you seek purity in public affairs? Do you desire to make impossible the corruption that now renders our name

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a by-word of reproach? Divorce the bar-room and the ballot-box.

Do you want to be able to say to the hurricane now agitating the business world, "Peace, be still?" remove the antagonism and competition between the saloon and the manufactory by annihilating the former.

Do you wish to find the clue to the solution of the labor problem, and at the same time strangle the commune as you would the cub of a man-eating tiger? Plug up the rum-cask, bung-hole and spigot.

If the rum power grows in influence the next quarter of a century as it has in the past we shall have good reason to fear for our national safety. The perpetuity of free institutions is impossible with ten open bars for every church. In politics this influence is almost omnipresent and omnipotent. It is the most important factor in our State and national politics. Each party bids energetically for its support. It dares dictate party measures; it not only demands party nominations, but obtains them. It either holds the balance of power or practically controls the majority of the voters of our great centers of population.

Secretary Bristow won a great reputation by his energetic and persistent attempts to throttle the whisky ring. In his victory he won a defeat. The smoke has lifted and we are surprised to find so few slain. The convicted criminals were pardoned and are now powerful political factors. Bristow obtained his reward in the national convention of his party. He missed the presidential nomination; had he obtained it he would inevitably have been defeated. No man can be elected to an important national office who has the hatred of the rum power. Party fealty rests but lightly and party principles and nominations must stand aside when the traffic is in danger. The justiceship of the Supreme Court of the United States passed the doughty reformer by to fall into the hands of his unknown law-partner. The brilliant record of Bristow is only a fleeting memory, and he is as surely dead and buried politically as either Colfax or Belknap.

After a long and bloody war to decide the question of State or Federal supremacy, what is the source of the reopening of the settled question in less than half a generation? The illicit distillery of South Carolina. We are so soon permitted to behold the inspiring spectacle of a State judiciary defying the national authority in behalf of the rascally moonshiners of the Palmetto State.

There is an old story that a man was given a small box in which was confined an evil spirit. In answer to its pleading he partially opened the box, and out of it sprang a giant which seemed to fill the earth. We have uncorked the rum-bottle, and from it has sprung a phantom whose shadow darkens the skies, and whose tread shakes the world. We are now engaged in the solution of the problem how to kill this old rum-devil and cork up the little ones.

Is this evil influence so dominant in the business world as the temperance fanatics allege? Political economists are strangely puzzled to account for the hard times. It is not the result of political corruption, as we hear shouted in every campaign. Political reform would no more remedy the evil than to toss a straw in the air would turn back the tide of a north-east gale. It is not the result of inflated or contracted currency. Financial tinkering would no more root out this evil than the breath of a baby would sweeten the miasmatic air which hovers over a stagnant swamp. The immense increase in every branch of our national resources plainly says they are not exhausted. Our agricultural products are almost beyond computation; our mines and fisheries, the manufacturing and mechanical industries, the various branches of trade and commerce have increased in far greater ratio than our population. There is an immense leakage somewhere, is the only intelligent answer to the perplexing question. We are taking our vast resources and with them trying to fill a bottomless pit. Were it not for our almost infinite fertility we should have become bankrupt long ago. Were the immense stream of money, worse than wasted for intoxicating liquors, diverted into legitimate channels of industry, imagination

could scarce picture the reality of the transformation that would be wrought. The demand it would create would send a thrill of life to every part of the land. Huts would blossom into cottages, hamlets into villages, towns into cities, ragged and famine-stricken families would revolutionize the dry goods and grocery trade. To supply these ever-increasing demands would fill the flapping sails of our idle ships until their white wings would dot every sea. The hum of machinery would be heard day and night until new buildings could be erected ; lands now idle and unproductive would smile with bounteous harvests to supply the increased food demand. All this would open a myriad of opportunities for remunerative labor to the industrious who now lament their enforced idleness. The wildest dream of fancy could scarcely equal the possibilities of a nation, as enterprising and industrious as ours, enjoying the varied and inexhaustible resources so lavishly poured into our laps if from the throat of our prosperity were taken away the iron hand of the rum-devil. Nothing short of the utter annihilation of the liquor-traffic, root and branch, will give permanent relief.

We are met here with the objection, urged with enormous statistics and specious arguments, that the business we seek to destroy is a legitimate one, with an immense capital invested, and furnishing employment to several hundred thousand laborers. A careful examination of labor statistics proves that if this immense capital were invested in any legitimate industry its employing capacity for labor would be increased many fold ; but, aside from this, is it a legitimate business and entitled to protection ?

A thrill of sympathy flashed through the land at the great conflagrations in Portland, Boston, Chicago, and St. Johns. It is a terrible thing for a great city to be destroyed by fire ; but what is that compared to the devastation of a nation ? Suppose an army were to sweep over this land, pillaging and destroying until there was not a single building left standing ; our villages, towns, and cities but heaps of smoldering ruins : until there was not a single shop or factory ; not an

agricultural or mechanical implement or product. Were such a disaster to visit this or any other land it would not impoverish or cripple it as does the liquor traffic. In financial waste alone every ten years this business costs as much as the entire destruction of a devastating army which should sweep bare the earth. The army would only affect our material interests; the liquor traffic in addition paralyzes our moral energies. When Portland, Boston and Chicago were in ashes they still existed in the warm hearts, keen brains and indomitable wills of the men who had built them and who could rebuild them, as they have done. A universal conflagration would leave the health and strength of the people unimpaired to retrieve the disaster; the liquor traffic, in addition to all the fearful devastation it works, saps the vitality of the people and renders it less and less possible ever to regain the lost ground.

When Chicago was in flames we were horror-stricken to learn there were men so infamous as to seek to spread the conflagration to obtain opportunity to plunder. We felt a grim satisfaction at the announcement that summary punishment was visited upon the miscreants. Our indignation reaches white heat when face to face with this fearful curse; to find men claiming to be patriots, good citizens, moral, upright men, aye, Christians, pecuniarily interested in this joy-blighting, soul-damning evil.

Yonder is a gallant ship, weather-beaten, wave-battered, driven in the teeth of a furious gale in the dangerous neighborhood of reefs and shoals. Amid the roaring of the sea and the shrill whistling of the wind you can hear the cannon signaling distress. Yonder, upon a rocky, jutting headland, is a bonfire flashing out into the darkness, just lit by the wrecker's torch. The exhausted and unsuspecting seamen are lured by the deceitful gleam upon the hidden rocks. A crash, a hoarse, despairing shriek borne faintly upon the wind tell you the tragedy is ended. A noble ship dashed to pieces, a valuable cargo destroyed, a score of souls hurled into eternity, that the dastardly miscreants, villains, might

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gather up the fragments that may float ashore. To your indignant rebuke, the wrecker replies with a leer:—

“I am a good citizen. I pay my taxes. I support my family. I am generous and warm-hearted. I am a Christian. If I did not light the bonfire some one else would.”

Wrecking is denounced and punished by the civilized world as one of the most despicable of crimes; and yet it is paled into tenderness and pity when compared to the heartless atrocity and fiendish malignity of the land-pirate who wrecks not the body but the soul. By legal enactment, by the creation of public sentiment, it is sought to recognize this crime of crimes as a legitimate industry.

In the name of God and outraged humanity I ask, “Is a tax receipt a license to murder your brother and plunder and outrage his helpless family?” We are told again and again these men are liberal; yes, but it is the liberality of the highwayman who tosses a crumb to the starving children of his victim whom he has assassinated and robbed. They are generous; but it is the generosity of the chicken thief who robs the hen-roost to send the Gospel to the heathen. They are warm-hearted; but it is to clasp hands in pretended friendship to find opportunity to cut the throat. Joab-like, they caress and stab at the same time. Of all crimes that curse the earth this takes the precedence. Compared to it horse-stealing is a virtue and burglary, piety. To poison the water springs, or to spread contagious disease, even in time of war to harass the enemy pillaging your house, is a capital crime. Worse than piracy, wrecking, breeding foul contagion, poisoning wells of water—aye, than all combined—is the business which blasts the reputation, curses the life, and damns the soul. Now ask, if you dare, is it a legitimate industry, worthy of sympathy or fostering care. He who engages in it should be an outlaw whose place of honor is the pillory, and whose fitting reward is the halter.

Doubtless there are many who will say, “Keep cool; do not call hard names. Rum-sellers are men. You can only win them by kind acts and gentle words.”

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If your next-door neighbor kept chained in his yard a dog in the advanced stages of hydrophobia, and should, by the offer of sweatmeats, coax your little child within the reach of the venomous fangs of the brute, how many kind words would you lavish upon the wretch who would seek to prevent you rescuing your child?

You would save the child if you had to kill both dog and master to do it. Not only the world, but God would justify you in doing so. I saw an illustration of Western life which is expressive of the politeness and courtesy necessary to persuade these land-pirates. The first picture represented a burglar standing upon a ladder, about to begin his operations upon a window, when the window was raised and the owner thrust a huge revolver in the face of his midnight visitor, simply saying, "You get." The other picture represented the burglar, having leaped to the ground and, dropping every thing, running for dear life, replying to the curt command he had just received, "You bet." The dialogue was brief but expressive. I hope to live to see the day when this incident will find its counterpart in our dealing with the liquor traffic. We shall simply say, "You get;" these robbers may say what they please, but they will have to obey. Who wants to use kind words to an incendiary? If you find him prowling around your house seeking to destroy your property, and may be the lives of your family, he need not whine if when your hand is extended toward him it is clinched, and in it a club to break his head. The time is coming when we shall see it is right and just not only to attempt the annihilation of this evil but the extermination of the vile wretches engaged in propagating it. For the unhappy victims we feel the deepest commiseration. No pains should be spared and no means left untried to raise them from their fallen condition and bring them back to virtue and sobriety. Moral suasion, backed by the warm heart and friendly hand, is the only power that will save them. But for the man who with smiles and friendly words leads the deluded soul over the bottomless pit and hurls him in, to make a dime, we have no

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tears to shed, no kind words to waste. He is not to be entreated ; he is to be suppressed, is the voice of reason and the voice of God.

We read with kindling zeal of the days of knight-errantry, when men based heroism upon duty to God, devotion to right, and defense of the weak. We may well ask, "Why may not the golden age of knightly deeds for God, and truth, and the oppressed be again revived?" It already exists. The only want is more chivalrous knights to enter the lists.

The foe is the source of crime ; the parent of pauperism ; the panderer and procurer to vice and disease ; its blighting presence is seen and felt in every department of life. It defiles the halls of legislature ; the senate chamber has been invaded by it and made the scene of drunken debauchery. In our courts of justice it bedruggles the judicial ermine and stains the hands of those to whom is committed the protection of the most sacred rights of the citizen. It beslimes the pulpit, and leads captive the Church of God in wicked complicity with its hellish schemes. She shares the blood money and builds her altars with the price of souls. It enters our homes and extinguishes the light of joy and hope. Wives and children worse than widows and orphans, gaunt with the famine of soul and body, bemoan their sad lot with tearless eyes because the fountain of grief has been impoverished.

To-day the voice of God is calling for volunteers, not to a holiday excursion ; not to a dress parade ; not to a sham fight ; but to a real battle-field. The contest may be long and fierce. The enemy is strong and determined. Battle after battle may end in defeat, but those who fight with God against sin always win.

During the late war, at perhaps its most critical stage, one of our armies was holding a very important position. It was attacked by the enemy in overwhelming numbers in the absence of the commander in chief. Hearing of the battle he sprang to his horse and rode to the front with might and main. His army, although stubbornly contesting every inch, were slowly but surely being driven from the field. Their line

wavered, broke, and began a hurried retreat. The broken and demoralized ranks were soon met by a dust-stained horseman, riding at full speed a steed flecked with foam. As the soldiers caught a glimpse of the well-known figure, a shout ran down the line—

“Hurrah! Sheridan has come! Sheridan has come!”

“The first that the General saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops;
What was done? What to do? A glance told him both,
Then striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line 'mid a storm of huzzahs,
And the wave of retreat checked its course there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause.”

A few nervous words of command and the broken ranks closed up. Under the inspiration of his fiery leadership the defeated army fell upon the enemy like a living thunderbolt, driving them before them like dry leaves before an autumn gale. The rout became a triumph. In the travail of defeat was the birth of victory. That ride has been made immortal on canvas and in song. As we read or hear it, our veins tingle, and we can scarce refrain from joining in the enthusiastic shout of the poet-artist:—

“Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!”

It was not the one that turned the tide of battle and saved the day; it was by the faith of the many that the leader held victory in his grasp.

We may be overwhelmed in the conflict that awaits us; we may be driven, little by little, from every vantage ground until, our ranks broken and utterly routed, we are retreating from the field. If then by faith we can hear the thundering hoofs of the war-horse bearing to our rescue the Captain of our salvation, and can shout that inspiring war-cry which has thrilled and nerved the soul of the Christian warrior in every age, “Christ has come! Christ has come!” we can renew the struggle and snatch victory out of the jaws of defeat.

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With Christ to lead and inspire us we cannot be overcome,
though all hell oppose.

“ Worlds are changing ; heaven beholding ;
Thou hast but an hour to fight ;
Now the blazoned cross unfolding,
On, right onward to the fight !

On ! Let all the soul within you
For the truth's sake go abroad ;
Strike ! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages—tell for God.”

APPENDIX.

“HAPS AND MISHAPS.”

A tale of clerical life, illustrating a minister's experience with typical Churches. It was first written as a lecture; after being delivered a number of times with very flattering success it was rewritten, and enlarged, and published as a serial in the “Saturday Night Dispatch,” Manchester, N. H. It will soon be published in book form after a thorough and careful revision. We append a few notices.

He proved himself a prince among story-tellers and fairly riveted the attention of his audience. Nor is the lecture devoid of solid worth, while its high moral tone is calculated to do good, and commend him to the more sober part of the community.—*Rev. Moses T. Runnels, Pastor of the Congregational Church, Sanbornton, (N. H.)*

The lecture was unique and racy. In describing the experiences of his hero he seemed to create a picture gallery for his audience. His characters were sketched with a bold hand, and some of them were placed in an intense light; yet they were so true to life, we could almost call them by name as they were placed before us.—*Lecture Committee, Newburyport, (Mass.)*

The story is a humorous delineation of the haps and mishaps which befell an itinerant Methodist preacher through several years' wanderings, told in Rev. Mr. Hamilton's happiest vein. But though full of broad and genial humor, there

are chapters which cannot be read without a tear of sympathy at the vivid portrayal of some of life's keenest sufferings; and throughout the whole story there is an underlying tone of remonstrance at the thousand-and-one petty annoyances to which an itinerant is needlessly, but all too frequently, subjected at the hands of officious intermeddlers, whose desire to run the machine is oftentimes stronger than their love of peace and harmony, or their hopes of heaven.

The comments of the press, wherever portions of the story have been read in public, have been flattering; and a Congregational clergyman of this State who is familiar with a portion of it pronounces the story "more humorous and likely to be more popular than Murray's 'Deacons.'" — *Saturday Night Dispatch, Manchester, (N. H.)*

LECTURES.

Rev. J. Benson Hamilton has lectured several hundred times in various parts of the country, his subjects are:

1. Every-day Heroism.
2. My Wife and I.

We select a few of the many notices which have been received.

Gen. Natt. Head, now Governor, says:—

I take great pleasure in recommending Mr. Hamilton; having heard him deliver several eloquent and interesting lectures, I consider we have but few his superior as a lecturer.

Gov. Smyth, the "War Governor," and Vice-President of the National Soldiers' Home, says:—

Mr. Hamilton is a gentleman of great popularity wherever he is known. I cordially recommend him as an entertaining and instructive lecturer.

It was a very superior entertainment, popular, practical, and satisfactory to all. This superb lecture was quite equal to those delivered by imported talent costing from one to two hundred dollars.—*Rev. J. B. Robinson, Pres't. Tilton Seminary, (N. H.)*

For an hour and a quarter he held the attention of every one present as if spell-bound. His voice is clear and musical, his manner pleasing and natural, and the lecture itself, while sparkling with wit and humor, was crowded with truth of the greatest practical importance. He won golden opinions from all who had the pleasure of listening to him.—*Newburyport Daily Herald, (Mass.)*

Among the lecturers of New England he occupies a foremost position. He possesses in an abundant measure the elements which constitute popularity, while under all is an earnestness of purpose that gives firmness and force to his efforts.—*Zion's Herald, Boston, (Mass.)*

He has perfect articulation, good style of delivery, and possesses rare powers of description and mimicry. His vivacity and versatility enable him to enchain his audience from beginning to end. His style of oratory and native ability cannot fail to win for him a reputation of no low degree.—*Coshocton Democrat, (Ohio.)*

The audience was large and appreciative. The lecture was the most interesting of the course, and was closely listened to and heartily enjoyed by those present. This lecture was delivered several years ago with marked success, but has been rewritten, and last evening it was presented in an entirely new dress.—*Manchester Daily Mirror, (N. H.)*

I consider it one the best lectures I ever heard. Its wit keeps an audience convulsed with laughter, and it enables them the better to appreciate the bits of wisdom and practical lessons which are interspersed so judiciously and eloquently. A lecture must be amusing and instructive to be successful,

"My Wife and I" is a skilled combination of these two characteristics.—*Col. Chas. H. Taylor, Editor Boston Daily Globe, (Mass.)*

The third lecture in the Hammond-street course was given by Rev. J. Benson Hamilton. The house was crowded. The subject, "My Wife and I," scarcely comprehends all the good things woven into the lecture, which was brimming with sound facts, and mirth-provoking humor, relating to love, courtship and marriage. It depicted many of the vagaries, delusions, and inconsistencies attending upon these three conditions in life, and gave an allopathic dose of good wholesome advice to those who were in either condition or contemplated entering such, besides several telling thrusts at those whose love experience is so remote a thing of the past that they cynically ridicule its symptoms in others of a more tender age. The lecture was greeted with the greatest delight, and evidently hit home to the consciousness of many a young and old person present.—*Lewiston Daily Journal, (Me.)*

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